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# PUBLIC/PRIVATE

## FEATURES

26

### AT ISSUE

#### Blurred lines

A long and winding road, *Jesse Brackenbury*

Studio city, *Aeron Hodges*

Office space, the sequel, *Shawn Hesse*

Trafficking in luxury, *Phil Primack*

Blinded by the light, *Michael S. Dukakis*

32

### The water's edge

Between the boundaries lies a complex, permeable domain

By *Steven G. Cecil AIA ASLA*

36

### Yours, mine, ours

The sharing economy nudges ownership aside

By *Diane Georgopoulos FAIA*

40

### Quiet, please

For some of us, solitude supports learning

By *Laura Wernick FAIA*

44

### Boston POPS

The city should compile a directory of public spaces

By *Jerold S. Kayden*

48

### GALLERY

#### Elevated allusions

Sculptures by *Ralph Helmick*

68

### FINISH

#### Darkness visible

#### ABOVE

Ogrydziak Prillinger Architects designed this San Francisco parklet, where parking spaces were turned into miniature public plazas with planters and seating. Photo: Tim Griffith

#### COVER

Illustration by James Weinberg

 MORE ONLINE  
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## DEPARTMENTS

### 3 FROM THE EDITOR

### 7 LETTERS

### 12 CONTRIBUTORS

### 18 UNSTRUCTURED

#### Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities

Reviewed by *Aleksandr Bierig*

#### Genius loci

By *Terri Evans*

#### Matter of course

Reviewed by *Alex Beam*

#### Ahead: Drawing Ambience

#### 5 questions: Julie Burros

Interviewed by *Gina Ford ASLA*

#### Seen

By *Maria Verrier*

### 61 BOOKS

#### Why We Build: Power and Desire in Architecture

Reviewed by *William S. Saunders*

#### Arts & Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England

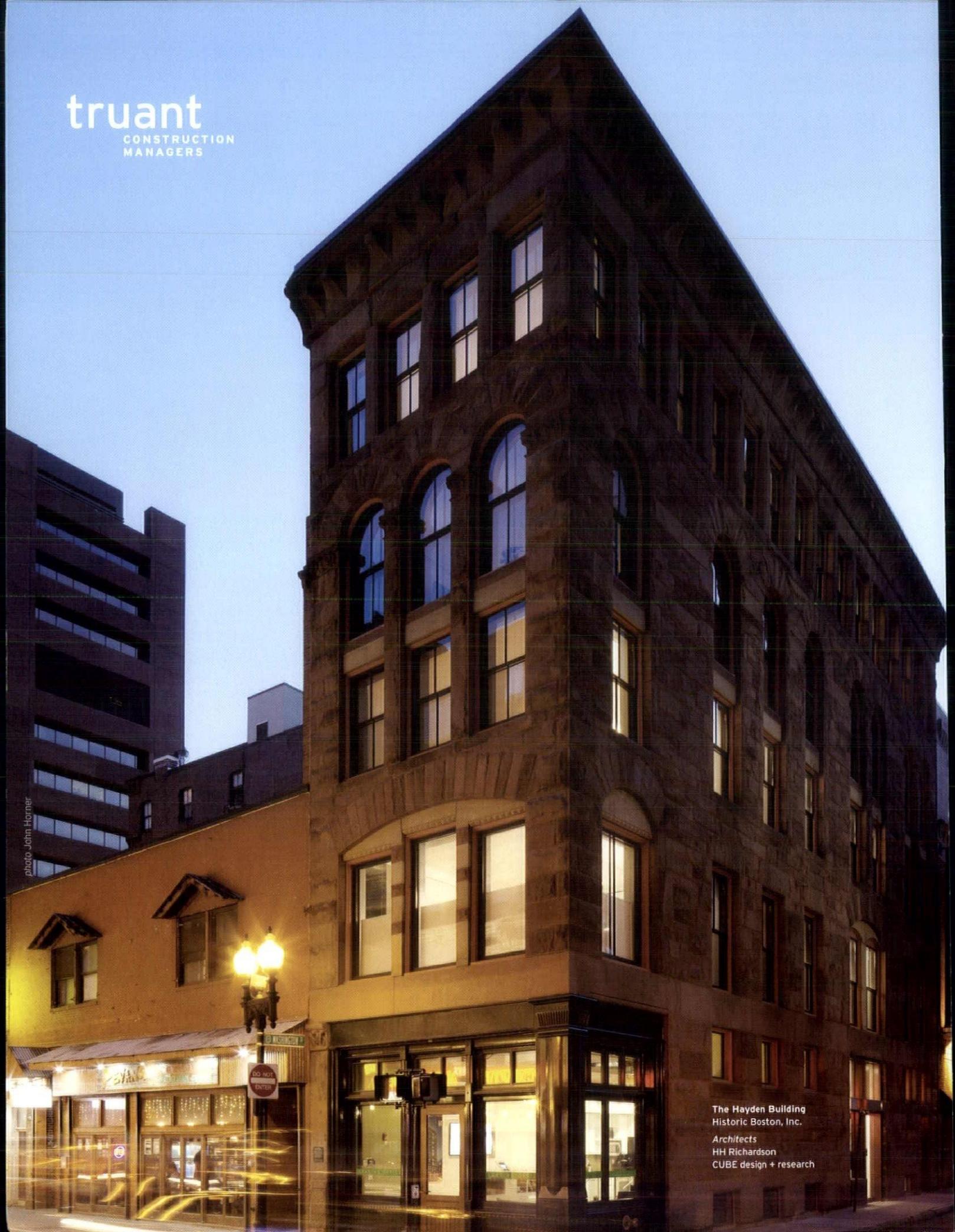
Reviewed by *Beverly K. Brandt*

#### The World's Greenest Buildings and The New Net Zero

Reviewed by *Charlotte Kahn*

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CONSTRUCTION  
MANAGERS

photo John Horner



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# THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

**Many of today's tech firms**, start-ups, and architecture studios are designed with an open plan. In theory, barrier-free offices are supposed to encourage creative discussion and spontaneous collaboration across departmental "silos." In practice, as anyone working in such spaces can attest, staffers wear earbuds at least some of the time, tuning out their colleagues and working in the cool quarantine of Wilco or Arcade Fire.

This is just one of the many contradictions in the way we approach the increasingly blurred boundaries between the public and private spheres. We fret over institutional surveillance and want assurances that our privacy is protected in every encounter, yet we willingly give over critical financial data and insights into our deepest personal preferences to Amazon or eBay. Social media mavens share wantonly on their personal devices, revealing intimate details once reserved for the confessional, yet they find police cameras at intersections a Big Brother-esque intrusion on their native right to run yellow lights.

Sharing is celebrated if it's ad hoc and individual, but not when it's codified into regulation. We love the "collaborative consumption" of the sharing economy, from Zipcar to TaskRabbit, and we feel a warm sense of nobility when we join a crowd-funding campaign. Yet the formal democratic contract—I put in my tax dollar to pay for your child's school, and you put in your tax dollar to pay for my park or subway—is frayed almost beyond recognition.

The overlap of public and private roles is manifest in the built environment as well. Business Improvement Districts tap commercial tenants to fund private security and maintenance for public streets. Public park improvements increasingly are funded through nonprofit "friends" conservancies or novel revenue streams such as underground parking lots. The commercial sector extends its hand to the cash-strapped public realm in exchange for naming rights and corporate banners billowing from every streetlight. Pretty soon the government will be selling space on postage stamps. Your logo here!

Zoning restrictions offer another opportunity to extract public benefits from the private side.

Elected officials passed laws ensuring public access to the shoreline, but it took a vigilant nonprofit group—The Boston Harbor Association—to monitor the law's enforcement and give us the HarborWalk. Probably dozens of new public spaces have been created in exchange for height or density easements granted to developers, but few local residents know where they are. (See Jerold Kayden's eye-opening article, "Boston POPS.")

The grand public buildings of the Works Progress Administration—courthouses, post offices, public schools—have been replaced by modular, off-the-shelf designs that are all about function (and economy). If architecture reflects the values of the times, what does this say about our collective respect for the public sector? Is it just a coincidence that many of the midcentury buildings so out of fashion, like Paul Rudolph's Orange County center in Goshen, New York—or Boston City Hall—are seats of government?

Nowhere is the fusion of public and private touted more than in the plan to bring the 2024 Summer Olympics to Boston. Whether you are an Olympics booster or a persuadable skeptic, it's undeniable that the massive civic undertaking would be the largest exercise in private-public cooperation the region has ever seen. It could be a great boon to upgrading our neglected infrastructure—or just a great boondoggle.

A robust nonprofit sector and a generous business community are both essential to a functioning society, but they are no substitute for the resources that become possible when everyone pays his or her share. Only the federal government, maligned as it is, could have funded the Big Dig. No one has yet paid for affordable housing or a new subway line with a Kickstarter campaign. And to be truly public, our shared civic spaces need to be visible, accessible, welcoming—and free. It's not a trending point of view in today's privatized culture, but free is actually something worth paying for. ■

Renée Loth  
Editor



Photo: Bert Seager



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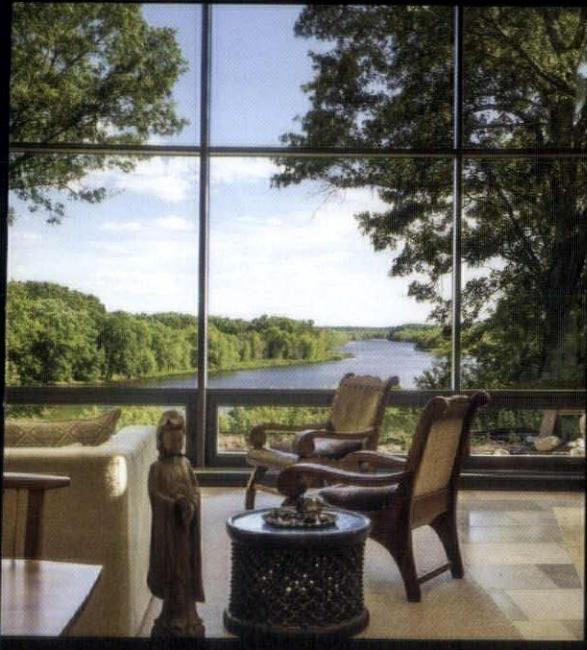
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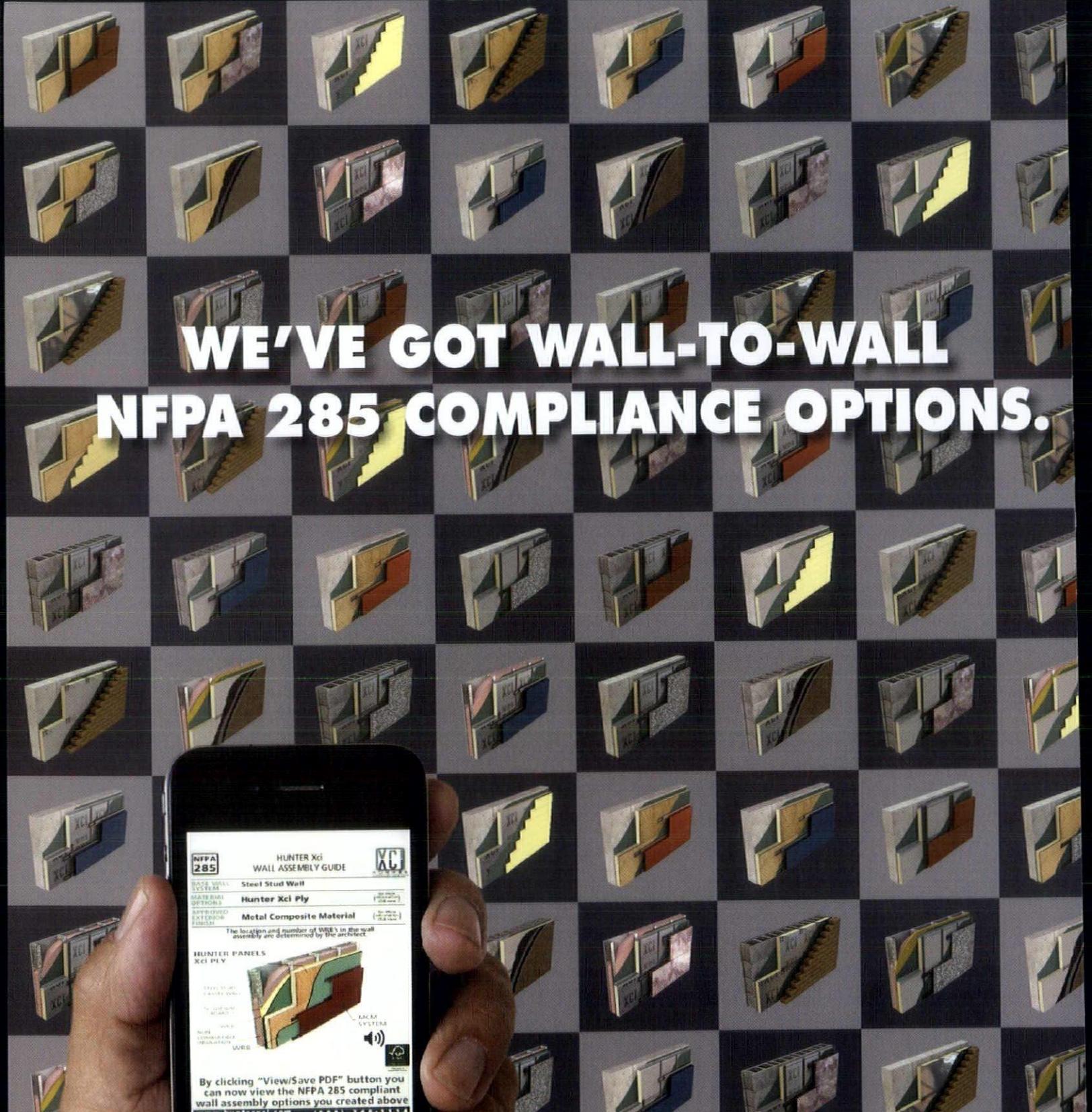


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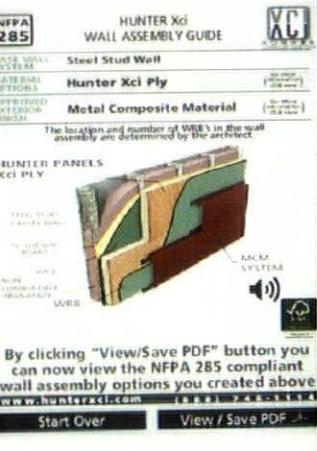
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# ON “GLOBAL” (WINTER 2014)

I was intrigued by Jay Wickersham's article “Code of context” and his thoughts on the global homogenizing of the built environment. Having led international design for close to 15 million square feet in the Middle and Far East, I cannot agree with Wickersham strongly enough.

My agreement is not an indictment of the profession—since many of the issues can be traced equally to client pressure, local review agencies, and time constraints—but a reaffirmation of Wickersham's comment about identifying appropriate design drivers. Successful design development stems from an intimate connection to place: an understanding of the people, culture, and setting. From personal experience I can attest that developing a successful design in an unfamiliar environment is an absolute challenge.

What is required to shift this movement is a renewed focus on two key drivers. Wickersham identified one: Sustainability. Those projects rooted in a well-conceived concept of climate, materials, and techniques resident in the region are a very good start. Second, I would advocate for culturally sensitive operational understanding.

How do these users uniquely interact with this building type? Yes, international architects are commissioned to bring global expertise and a different perspective to the typology, but understanding how that typology will be affected, at an operational level, will determine how well it is accepted. An architecture that springs from a combination of cultural and climate-based sensitivity is far more likely to be regionally successful.

By no means am I saying there is an easy fix. Our profession is one of creativity and exploration, and I truly believe in our intentions. Developing an understanding of a new way of life takes significant commitment in a world obsessed with “speed to market,” but it is the challenge we accept, as the magazine puts it, with the “uneasy excitement of global practice.”

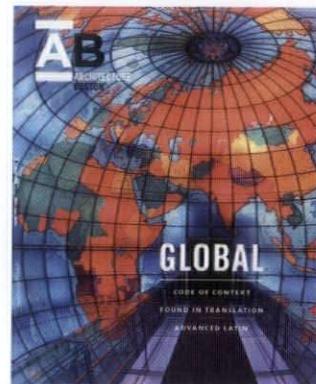
T. SCOTT RAWLINGS AIA  
Payette, Boston

**Jay Wickersham outlines** several challenges for architects who practice globally: challenges to make their work more sustainable, relevant, and socially responsible. Challenges fall into many categories: Some are projects that are envisioned to glorify powerful planning leaders despite the logic of the marketplace or good principles of city-making. To some degree this is symptomatic of increasingly competitive cities and their planning leaders vying for promotion and stature. Others are projects that aspire to high social or environmental goals but fall prey to realities of funding or scheduling. With many private developers, one tends to see so much of the proverbial “green-washing” that rarely results in projects that are particularly sustainable.

But in China, recent revelations of widespread corruption among party officials are having an impact on business-as-usual planning. Many cities are putting large public projects, such as exhibition halls, museums, and performance spaces, on hold, while other public officials are demanding more private participation in large-scale urban projects. This is a good first step toward bringing more rigor to development in China that far too often has led to poorly conceived or executed publicly funded projects.

Another change that is coming is more accountability. Many of our planning directors are asking us to protect traditional residential neighborhoods and historic buildings from the wrecking ball, and agricultural areas are being preserved close to city centers to provide farm-to-table enterprises. Our more enlightened public clients are asking us to reverse the ills of superblocks that have rendered so much of China's cities so pedestrian unfriendly. Newer policies are requiring that displaced villagers, all too frequently banished to the hinterlands, be relocated on site to preserve social organization and community cohesion.

Although China's autocratic government has a long way to go to calm some of our most uneasy feelings about social



equity and environmental sustainability, it has made a lot of progress the 15 years I have practiced.

ALAN MOUNTJOY AIA  
NBBJ, Boston

I've been working in the Middle East for quite some time, most recently in Saudi Arabia, and things have definitely changed for women architects.

Four years ago, during my first visit to Saudi Arabia, I will admit I was somewhat fearful about traveling to a country where I was advised that women must be accompanied everywhere by their husbands, and concerned I might make a cultural misstep during the trip. When the pilot announced the plane was 40 minutes to landing in Riyadh, I changed out of my Western clothing and into an abaya and hijab, which was hot and quite oppressive once I got out in the desert environment. The next day my client told me it was unnecessary for me to wear a hijab, which was a relief.

I am now at the point where I travel by myself (without my “three husbands from Cambridge Seven”), and I see more solo Saudi women every time I fly. I am used to being the only woman in a room of 30 men here in the States, so that aspect of Saudi Arabia did not faze me in the least, and everyone has been very respectful.

One piece of advice I have for architects hoping to work in the Middle East is this: Don't expect to immediately get down to business when you arrive. Building relationships in Saudi Arabia

and in other parts of the Gulf Region is very important. Expect to spend about a day sharing family stories over tea and coffee. Don't rush this part of the process—it can be just as important as the presentation you are there to make.

PATTI INTRIERI AIA  
Cambridge Seven Associates  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Having spent a good part** of my design career flying to countries such as China, Singapore, and India, I found the conversation with Moshe Safdie ["Citizen of the world"] to resonate with my own experience—especially where he describes searching for "the particular," or lack thereof.

When I first started working overseas in the mid-1990s, we were hired exclusively for our Western know-how. Our value was judged on how well we could impart our knowledge and experience from the United States. Thus we were not inclined to regard "the particular." We often worked alone rather than with local partners. We used suspect translators and were whisked from one meeting to another before dinner and the hotel. Visiting a project site was almost cursory. Our clients also were not interested in the particular.

Friends and family would ask: What did you see? Restaurants, hotels, traffic, and airports, mostly. Others would ask if we spoke the language or had some specific knowledge of the place. No, we didn't—we were hired to be "American" designers. Intoxicating at first, the process of continually being mined for a singular perspective is gratifying for only so long.

Twenty years later, working in some of these same places has naturally evolved with globalization. Thankfully, interest in the particular is now paramount to the success of most visible overseas projects. We now spend more time on and around a site than in meetings and dinners. We have indispensable local partners who contribute to defining the particular. We now find we are engaged more for our past experience working in a country than for being from elsewhere. At a recent meeting in China, all the consultants and the client were younger than us, and the

entire meeting was conducted in English. A lot has changed.

CHRISTIAN LEMON  
Lemon / Brooke Landscape Architecture  
Concord, Massachusetts

**With the pressing desire** for innovation and the pervasive need for differentiation in architecture practiced around the globe, the focus on context has taken a backseat. Not so long ago, the notion of *genius loci*, simplistically translated as "spirit of place," was considered essential to designing buildings in keeping with the local environment and their immediate surroundings, including adjacent buildings. Today, architects are more intent on making their own personal design statements, choosing a style and architectural language that rarely makes any reference to its neighbors. This is an ironic trend, especially when there is so much attention being given to "sustainable" design.

These self-referential structures dominate in countries where new buildings of scale are occurring—mostly designed by Western architects in rapidly developing countries such as China and India, the Middle East (primarily United Arab Emirates), and in parts of South America. But in an emerging continent such as Africa the architecture tends to be more contextual because there is limited capital, more direct access to local materials, and building methods that are by nature regional and therefore more sustainable. I believe we need to consider more carefully what it means to be contextual, and why it is important, especially with the scale of buildings being constructed in this age of urbanization.

In line with this question, we should more closely examine the role of the Western architect and the responsibility we have to identify, integrate, and incorporate cultural, historical, and environmental elements of a site in the designs of our buildings as we practice globally.

STEVE BRITTAN ASSOC. AIA  
CannonDesign, Boston

**CORRECTION:** A caption accompanying the "Code of context" article in the Winter 2014 issue misidentified a project of MASS Design Group. The illustration is of the Ambulatory Care Center in Butaro, Rwanda.

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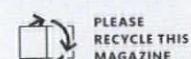
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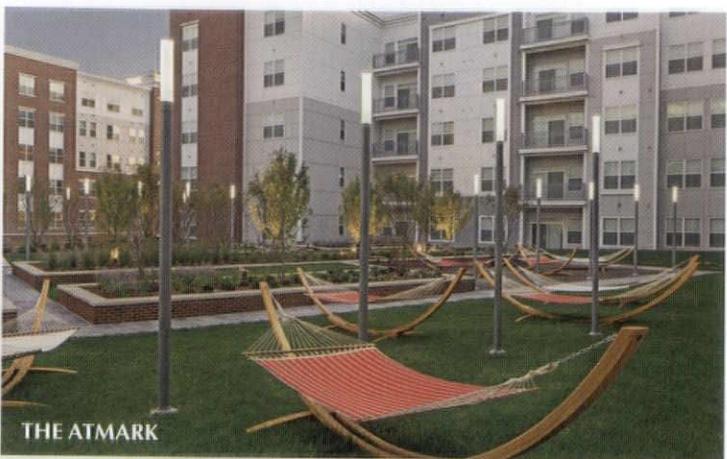
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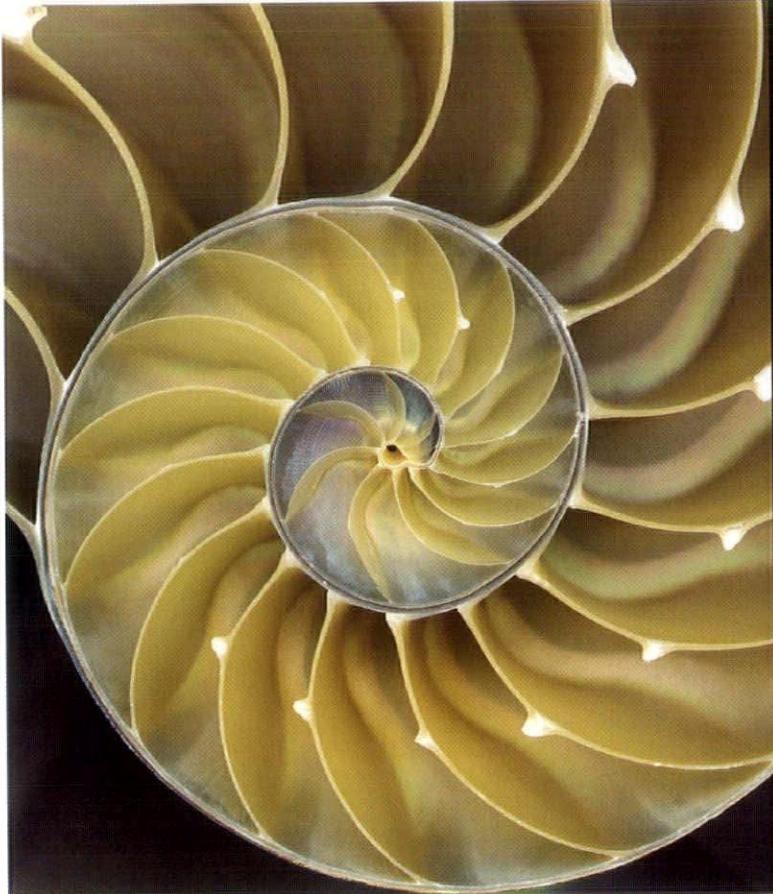
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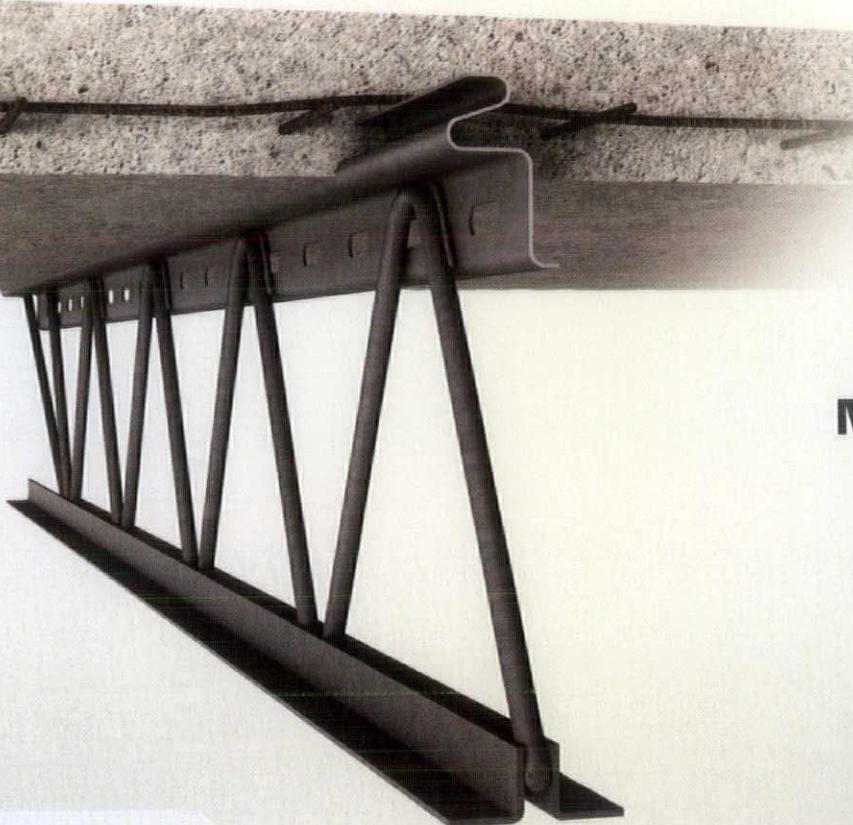
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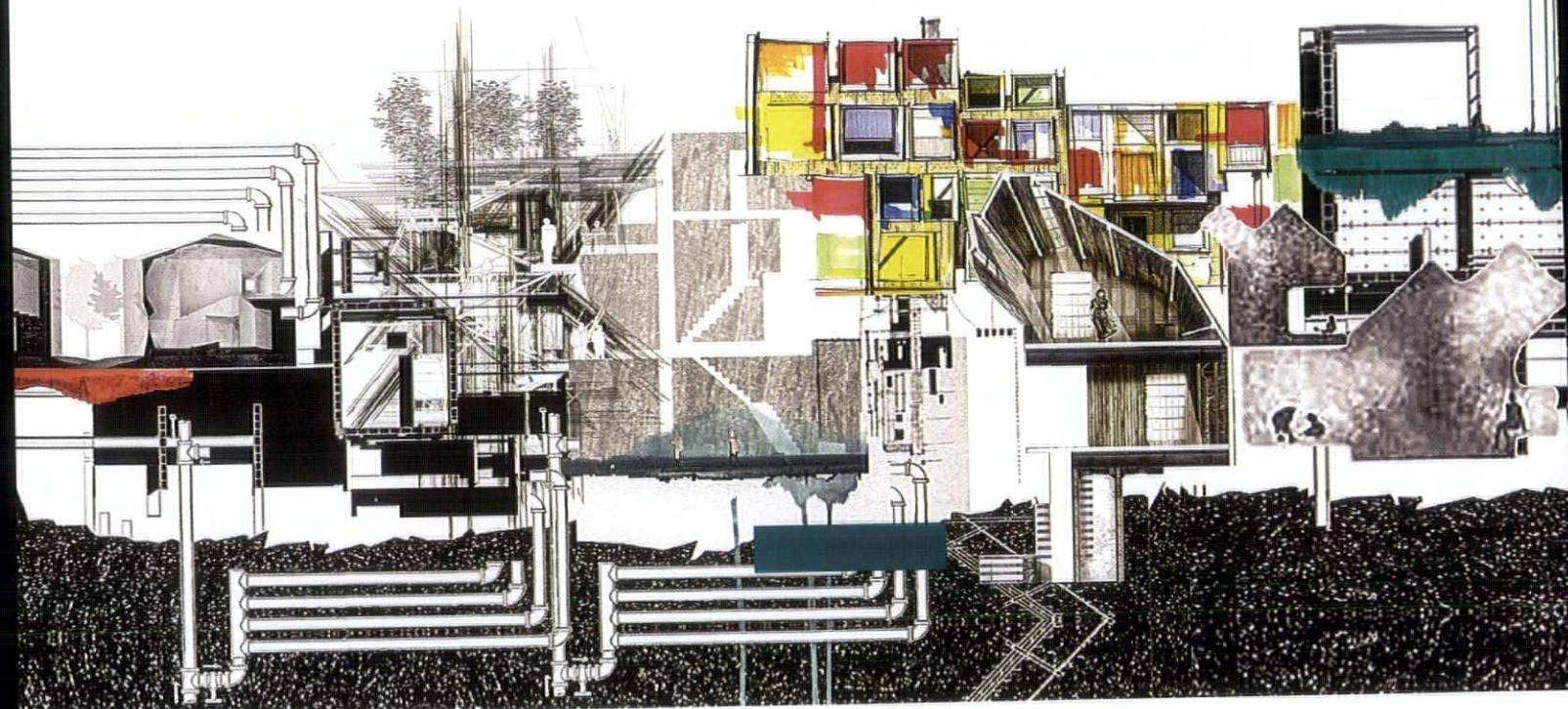
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# UNSTRUCTURED

Opinions and Observations



## Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities

Museum of Modern Art, New York

Through May 10, 2015

**Few would question** that this exhibition has its heart in the right place. A collection of six very different studies for six very different “megacities”—Mumbai, India; Hong Kong; New York City; Lagos, Nigeria; Rio de Janeiro; and Istanbul—the schemes each respond to some aspect of the unbalanced economic distribution that has characterized urban growth in recent decades. Dense with infographics, broad statistics, and ambitious statements, the show aims to be both encompassing in its global reach and precise in its responses.

As part of MoMA’s “Issues in Contemporary Architecture,” the curators asked six architect teams to create projects for these cities. Like the shows that preceded it in the series—*Rising Currents* in 2009 and *Foreclosed* in 2011—the success or failure of the exhibition is that of the commissioned projects. But unlike the

exhibitions that preceded it, *Uneven Growth* is an overly broad prompt. While the curators acknowledge these varying contexts, one has to question whether Hong Kong and New York City belong alongside Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro, since the political, economic, and historical pressures in each city trigger such vastly divergent responses—a whimsical utopian scheme in Hong Kong, an examination of housing policy in New York City, a resourceful small construction in Mumbai, and a catalog of improvised construction methods from Rio de Janeiro.

Although these projects are each earnest engagements, they don’t make much sense together. Certain issues reappear in several projects—centrally, the problem of the finance and construction of housing for poor and middle-class residents—but the overall

effect is disjointed. Certain responses are modest and emulate (or fetishize) “bottom-up and informal” techniques; other projects attempt to reprocess massive structures of growth and development. Overall lessons are hard to come by because each city presents a unique array of challenges. *Uneven Growth* is, well, uneven and would have done well to narrow its global ambitions.

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ALEKSANDR BIERIG is a PhD student at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

ABOVE

URBZ, a research collective in India, worked with Ensamble Studio (Spain) and MIT-POPLab (Massachusetts) to envision Mumbai’s live-work and public infrastructures moving upward to relieve pressure on the land. Courtesy: MoMA

## GENIUS LOCI

## F is for Franklin Street

**Boston is a city that leaves clues to its past** as much as it may preserve it. They make detectives of passersby, partners in the search for the stories that buildings, pavements, and names wait to share.

Such is the curve of Franklin Street in the heart of the Financial District. Seen from Washington Street, past the steel form of Millennium Tower taking shape behind the old Filene's façade, Franklin Street reads as slightly ungainly, a pot-bellied spread of asphalt flanked by undistinguished storefronts. The clues start here.

The curve itself tells of Charles Bulfinch, architect, planner, and selectman. He laid it out in 1794 for the Tontine Crescent, a development inspired by visits to London and Bath a decade earlier. The ellipse of 16 townhouses on the southern side of the street featured an arcaded central element, where he offered space to two nascent civic organizations: the Massachusetts Library Society and Massachusetts Historical Society. (A related clue can be found nearby on City Hall Avenue, off School Street. There, the central element of the Tontine Crescent was replicated in the 1930 façade of Kirstein Business Library, now closed and in disrepair.)

The crescent stood across a landscaped garden from eight semi-detached residences Bulfinch designed on Franklin Place, which he named to honor Benjamin Franklin, who was born nearby. At the center of the garden stood a marble urn etched with Franklin's name. Bulfinch considered the Tontine Crescent his architectural masterpiece, but a volatile economy, balky investors, and massive cost overruns made it his financial ruin. The houses were demolished in 1858 for redevelopment. Had they not been, they would have met the fate of their successors in 1872, when Boston's Great Fire leveled 60 acres of the Financial District.

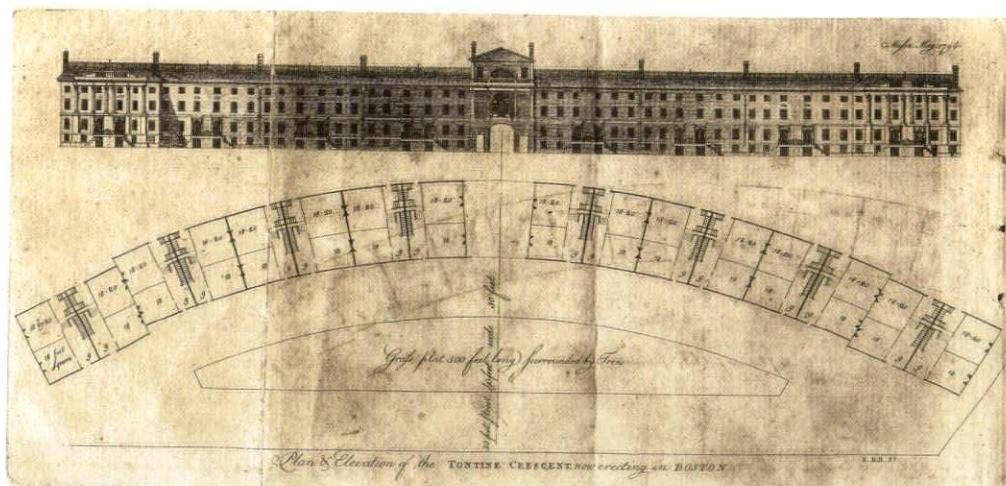
Other clues: the name of Arch Street, which passed beneath the Crescent's central arch to connect Bulfinch's development to Summer Street, and a fading plaque and photograph at the corner of Franklin and Hawley streets.

Bulfinch's ambitions for shaping a new Boston reached beyond residential development. Following the repeal of the Puritan ban on theater in 1792, he drew up plans for the Boston Theatre at the northwest corner of Franklin and Federal streets. After the building burned in 1798, Bulfinch designed its successor. Across from the theater site, a bronze plaque at Number 75 marks the spot of Holy Cross, Boston's first Catholic Church, which he designed

in 1803. He lived to witness the demolition of many of his buildings but was spared learning the fate of the Tontine Crescent. His children salvaged the urn he had dedicated to Franklin and placed it over their father's grave at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

Franklin Street is also home to younger ghosts. In 1934 Hatch Shell architect Richard Shaw designed a slim Art Deco chapel, now closed, at Number 49. Its heavy glass-inset aluminum doors have been replaced with a more practical entrance for the restaurant that now occupies the space, and the ecclesiastical motif above the door is hidden beneath its sign. Inside, the honeycombed ceiling is one of the only remaining original design elements.

Political ghosts linger as well. Deep in the bowels of the old Boston Safe Deposit and Trust at Number 100, Mayor John Collins met regularly with his brain trust in the 1960s, leading efforts to forge his own vision for a "New Boston." Officially termed The Coordinating Committee, the group's meeting place gave them the enduring nickname "The Vault."



**TERRI EVANS** is the communications manager of Shepley Bulfinch and leads architectural walking tours for Boston By Foot.

## ABOVE

Plan and elevation of the Tontine Crescent, Boston, in 1796, engraved by Samuel Hill. Photo: Boston Athenaeum

## MATTER OF COURSE

## Reimagining the Government Service Center

**To many Bostonians**, Paul Rudolph's monumental and monolithic Government Service Center (gsc) is "that weird parking garage on Beacon Hill," or "the concrete eyesore up the street from Mass General." Occupying a curved-triangle block bounded by Cambridge, New Chardon, Merrimac, and Staniford streets in downtown Boston, the center has been a controversial site almost since the day it opened in 1971. A classic Brutalist redoubt, it was supposed to include a tubular, futuristic office tower, which was never funded by the state.

Still home to the Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center and the state's Department of Unemployment Assistance, the gsc is now an urban disaster area. The tiered concrete plaza that Rudolph hoped would be an oasis for lunch-breaking bureaucrats is now cocooned in chain-link fencing and barbed wire intended to deter the city's homeless from camping there. "It is an underutilized and sad corner of the city," says Mark Pasnik, a founding principal of over,under and a professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology—this from a man who *likes* the site. "I think these buildings are troubled but are also really interesting. They represent the heroic imagination of a previous generation, and they need care and transformation."

Pasnik and his Wentworth colleague Carol Burns, of Taylor & Burns Architects, devoted a semester to brainstorming

alternative uses, or dynamic readaptations, of Rudolph's aging gsc. In a course they labeled EPIC—externally-collaborative, project-based, interdisciplinary curricula—they invited interior designers from Wentworth, landscape architects from Northeastern University, and officials from the state's Division of Capital Asset Management to meet with their class of 27 students to dream up new "programs" for the Service Center.

I attended Pasnik and Burns's end-of-semester review, when student teams presented seven proposals for reworking the gsc to eight guest architects. The concepts varied widely. One team simply treated the site as a commercial development opportunity, breaking up the low, linked structure into four buildings with greater floor-to-area ratios that match the high-rises now surrounding the site. Another tried to exploit the site for tourism, replacing the center's parking garage with a Boston History Museum, surrounded by mixed-use towers of office space, residences, and a hotel.

Tagging along behind three of the feistier reviewers—David Eisen, Mark Klopfer, and Jim McNeely—I heard three of the seven presentations. As the project architect for the Lindemann center, McNeely was a rich addition to the critical mix. The original program for the mental health building "was written by a bunch of psychiatrists for whom money was no object," he recalled. It had a swimming pool, a chapel, electrical and



plumbing workshops for occupational therapy, coffee shops, and a theater. "They thought the state would cough up the money to maintain it, which it didn't," he said.

I found myself most involved in "Against Impenetrability," a three-student initiative to open up the fortress-like structure to the outside world. "Right now, the public doesn't know how to use the building or what's inside it," said team member Kaz Cunningham. Among the solutions proposed was to open up the building on its north-south axis, creating a hypothetical flow of pedestrians from North Station up and down Beacon Hill to government office buildings, to the medical centers, and to the Financial District.

The trio showed an elegant rendering of the building's north-facing "urban passageway" lifted onto slender pilotis, allowing a sightline from Merrimac Street straight up the hill to Cambridge Street. In an early sketch, the students built geodesic overlays onto Rudolph's forbidding entrances, only a few of which remain in use. "What happened to those Buckminster Fuller entrances?" McNeely quizzed the students. "Easier to draw than to build?"

Klopfen pointed out that one proposed passageway through the site blissfully ignored new construction that had sprung up since Rudolph's time. "You come through here," he said, pointing at a drawing, "but where do you end up? At the blank side of a Graham Gund building." The students hadn't integrated One Bowdoin Square, Gund's low-rise that abuts the Rudolph site, into their plans.

Noting that a student had placed an uncovered hotel entrance away from the street, Klopfen noted a practical problem: "People get out of the cab from Logan, in the rain; they don't want to walk to the hotel entrance," he said. "It can't be there."

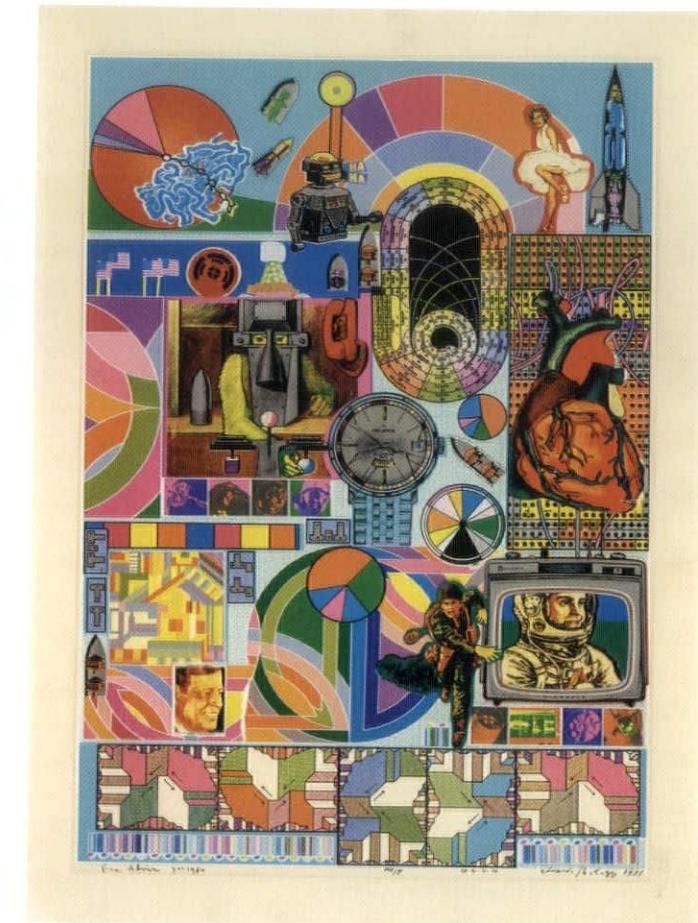
I asked Greg Gibson, a student member of the "Impenetrability" team, what he thought of Rudolph's Services Center after spending a whole semester working on it. "I like the building even though I know it's unpopular," he said. "It's a byproduct of Rudolph's ideas. He thinks on a higher level than most individuals, and it's hard to appreciate that."

You've drunk the Kool-Aid, I suggested. What about all that massed concrete? "Concrete has qualities that are pretty harsh," Gibson replied. "But you have to accept that as a byproduct of this great work."

**ALEX BEAM** writes a column for *The Boston Globe* and is working on a book about Vladimir Nabokov. "Matter of course" visits exceptional architecture classes at New England schools.

#### LEFT

Student work from the Wentworth seminar included renderings by Sara Zettler and Jared Guilmott (left) and Matt Arsenault (right).



#### AHEAD

### Drawing Ambience: Alvin Boyarsky and the Architectural Association

The Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence  
April 24–August 2, 2015

**One of the most influential figures** in 20th-century design education, Alvin Boyarsky championed architecture as an artistic venture, a wide-ranging practice that is as much about drawing and publication as it is about design and construction. During his tenure as chairman of the Architectural Association in London (1971 to 1990), Boyarsky orchestrated an exhibition and publication program that situated drawing as a form of architecture in its own right. The RISD show highlights the impressive collection he assembled: drawings by Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, and Daniel Libeskind, and folios representing the work of Peter Cook, Peter Eisenman, Coop Himmelblau, and Kisa Kawakami, among others. Together, they explore the techniques and spirit of drawing practices that permeated this time of experimentation in architecture worldwide.

#### ABOVE

*Bash*, by Eduardo Paolozzi, uses material from mass media and pop culture to create a collage, 1971. © Eduardo Paolozzi. From the Collection of the Alvin Boyarsky Archive.

**5 QUESTIONS****Feeding the soul**

Julie Burros is Boston's chief of arts and culture, a position recently created by Mayor Martin Walsh. Formerly the director of cultural planning for the city of Chicago and trained as an urban planner, she provided assistance to cultural organizations focused on strategic growth. Her first initiative in Boston is to lead the creation of a cultural plan.

**What is your favorite spot in Boston?**

One thing I appreciate that is uniquely Boston—it lacks a grid. I walk around trying to navigate, and there is confusion: Streets change names halfway through. You catch a little glimpse of that. There are cobblestones and little lanes. There is a great sense of how everything looks and fits together. I am delighting in the feeling of a city that isn't driven by a grid.

**How does investment in arts and culture benefit Boston as a whole?**

It's very different from investing in hedge funds or other economic mechanisms—

it will benefit Boston in multifaceted ways. Research on the impact of funding for artists and arts organizations [shows] a positive impact on tourism and economic development, creative industries and education, the general culture of innovation in the city. One of the most important benefits is that it helps seed the ecosystem—arts and culture is the stuff that feeds people's souls.

**What elements are crucial to a successful cultural plan?**

Assessment and analysis of what conditions exist in the landscape and the field. It also requires public and stakeholder engagement, which is the cornerstone of any cultural planning process. Then, there is a synthesis—pulling things together that reflect the goals of the people of Boston, the cultural community as well as the administration. Mayor Walsh has talked about wanting to make Boston

a municipal arts leader. That's a complex goal, but by establishing my role and initiating the plan, the mayor is creating greater visibility and beginning to put the proper resources in place.

**How can the design community support your cultural planning efforts?**

By being receptive to an interdisciplinary approach that embraces the role of arts and culture in the everyday lives of people and their experience of the civic realm. The ultimate collaborative approach would be to have artists on design teams at the earlier stages of all kinds of civic projects and public works. That is my dream. Beyond creating, say, a mosaic within a train station, maybe the artist on a transit project could be a dancer who is well versed on how to move people in the best possible ways. I'd ask the design community to remain open-minded, creative, and aspirational about a collaborative, interdisciplinary process.

**If you were going to be stuck on a desert island, what piece of art would you take with you?**

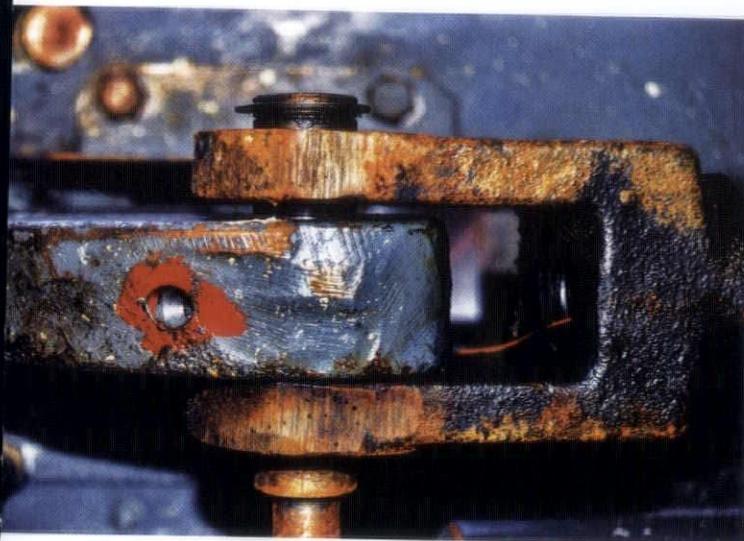
Here's the thing: If I'm on a desert island, let's just say any island, I'm going to assume that it is a physically beautiful place, so I'm not going to bring a piece of visual art with me. I would bring the collected works of Stephen Sondheim. I've been completely obsessed with it for a little while, listening to Sondheim all the time. I'd bring a solar-powered device so that I could listen to the music. If I had that with me, I don't think I would ever feel alone.



Interviewed by **GINA FORD ASLA**, a principal at Sasaki Associates.

**LEFT**

Julie Burros in her Boston City Hall office.  
Photo: Ryuji Suzuki



## SEEN

### "The Voke"

Worcester, Massachusetts

**Acquainting myself with abandoned historic buildings** during moments of silence—before their rebirth—is something I consider a privilege. Oftentimes, it's as if the contents of these remarkable structures are mindfully aware of the changes about to take place. Ordinary in their day, today they carry special significance: The keys left on a sink. A flag draped over a chair. Elevator gates left slightly ajar. Hatboxes and broken glass. Weighing stations and other machines of commerce rusted and hushed.

And so my work begins, capturing the character and temperament of discarded objects and beautiful decay. The images become storytellers, offering tangible proof of lives who labored, learned, convalesced, or worshiped within these buildings.

At an early age and hand in hand with my father, who made his career preserving architectural heritage, I was encouraged to experience these landmarks firsthand. Worcester Vocational High School was no exception. It was a magical place to photograph. Once bustling with students studying trades such as woodworking and drafting, "the Voke" abounded with signs of its former spirit—graffiti lockers, scattered tools, magnificent machinery. Having inherited my father's love of old things, I turn my attention and camera to artifacts that have been discarded but by no means overlooked.

**MARIA VERRIER** is a photographer based in Concord, Massachusetts.

ABOVE

Photo: Maria Verrier

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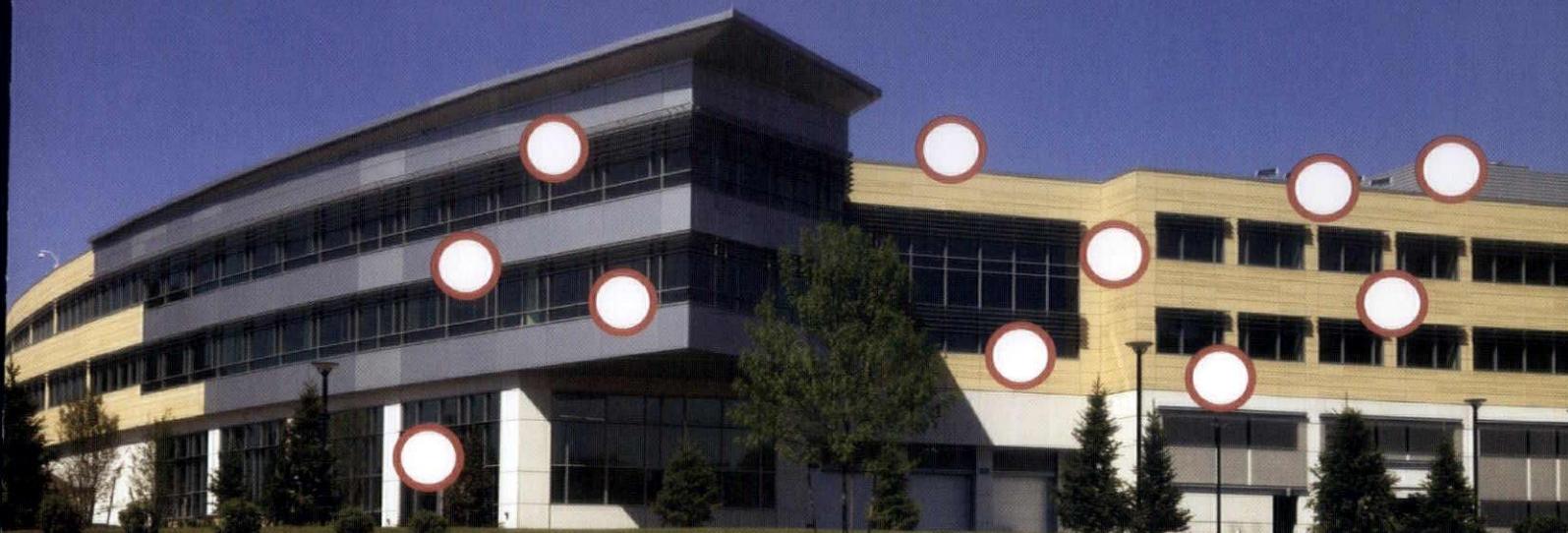
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Above: 175-185 Wyman Street in Waltham, MA designed for Hobbs Brook Management by Margulies Perruzzi Architects

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# BLURRED LINES

**Whether the milieu** is social space, the workplace, residential life, transportation, or civic territory, what arises when the public and private realms intersect? This issue of *ArchitectureBoston* mines the boundaries that are muddled when these domains overlap, exposing the friction, and benefits, that lie beneath.



JAMES WEINBERG is a Boston-area illustrator, designer, and teacher whose work has been featured in AIGA's Best of New England Show and *Communication Arts*.

## A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

by Jesse Brackenbury

**The Rose F. Kennedy Greenway** is a success for all. The public loves it: 987,000 came last year for its carousel, food trucks, Wi-Fi, and events, plus millions more enjoyed its fountains, public art, and gardens. It has spurred massive investment in nearby real estate. Philanthropists have contributed \$25 million to the park. But the Greenway is a public space with a complex provenance.

As part of the federal Big Dig project, its blueprint was overseen by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, reviewed by multiple city agencies, designed by six landscape architecture firms, informed by community advocates, and complemented by four nonprofits designing cultural facilities for the Greenway. Yet the nonprofit Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy—responsible for maintaining, programming, and improving the park in a public-private partnership with the Commonwealth—was not involved in the park's planning. The ramifications of that exclusion affect the public's experience of the Greenway today, and the lessons learned must be applied in developing new public spaces in Boston.

Elements of the original design continue to impair the park experience. Visitors are insufficiently buffered from the car and truck congestion on adjacent roads; this unpleasant experience results from wide streets (intended to prevent traffic from backing up on the ramps) and flat park terrain (chosen to improve sightlines for safety). Since the Greenway wasn't built to accommodate bicyclists, the Conservancy struggles to keep pedestrians safe from bikers in the park who just want a safe, attractive route from North Station to South Station.

Prioritization of specific design concepts trumped many of the finishes and amenities that enhance

the park experience. An example: "View corridors" (combined with cost-cutting) resulted in barren plazas in front of the spectacular Rowes Wharf arch. Consequently, the Conservancy's first improvements were focused on adding basics: scores of movable tables and chairs, dozens of umbrellas for shade, wayfinding signage, and electrical outlets. Other items, such as potable water, are still lacking. Having the park operator involved in the park planning would certainly have helped address operational considerations: The Conservancy cares for the park out of unheated, unlit outdoor storage units located four blocks from the park.

The Greenway hosts 300 free events annually, but not as the original design anticipated. A "Great Room" between State and India streets was envisioned as an event site across two park spaces by closing a half-block, but street closure is beyond the Conservancy's authority and happens infrequently. Consequently, festivals are scheduled in other areas in the park, but these spaces' infrastructure (and nearby residents) did not anticipate big events. The original scheme called for a café; by accommodating innovation, the Greenway has instead become a food truck hub.

Six years of operations have been instructive. The Commonwealth has just tasked the Conservancy with care of 1.3 additional acres along the corridor. New public-realm planning is under way through the Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan and a ramp-parcel study. As downtown's public space is reshaped by the development the Greenway has spurred, the recent past must instruct our immediate future. ■

**JESSE BRACKENBURY**, executive director of the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, has also worked for the Boston Consulting Group and the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation.



## STUDIO CITY

by Aeron Hodges

I live with my husband in Boston, and we share a 375-square-foot studio.

That may seem small for two people, but I grew up in a tiny apartment in Shanghai. Space was in high demand in the city, and families like mine lived in a communal housing typology adapted from many early-20th-century estates. The "Shi Ku Men" housed a half-dozen families sharing a small courtyard and a kitchen, where daily gossip was exchanged and childhood friendships were made.

Several years ago, when I was working in Tokyo, my husband and I lived in a simple, well-designed 200-square-foot apartment near Ginza. Although there wasn't much room, everything we needed was readily available. There was no wasted space. Every object, from alarm clock to rice cooker, was essential and had its designated location. I strive to practice that level of precision and discipline in my own Fenway apartment.

There are many perks to living in the city, including convenience to transportation and proximity to various urban amenities, but these perks also come with a sizable price tag. Rent costs approximately \$4

per square foot in the Fenway area. We had to make a choice between renting a 650-square-foot one-bedroom apartment for \$2,600 a month or sharing a small studio for \$1,500 a month. For us, the decision was easy. We chose to save on rental costs and adopt a compact living style, ceding a measure of private space in exchange for a stake in the city's public amenities.

Sharing a studio is not for everyone; it is a lifestyle that requires extra effort. Without a separate bedroom, we have synchronized our sleeping schedule so that we don't keep each other up. Meticulous planning is often needed for smart use of space. We scrutinize what we really need for living versus what we can live without.

If the rental cost is so high and the limited space adds constraints to our lifestyle, why wouldn't we move out of the city? I wouldn't be able to take a 10-minute ride on the commuter rail to work. We would lose the convenience of a supermarket at our back door, having more than 20 restaurants and bars to choose from for a night out, and our frequent walks to the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of Fine Arts. The city is our living room.

We are not alone in sacrificing space in return for what the city has to offer. During a focus group study conducted by the research initiative WHAT'S IN, the majority of the participants preferred to downsize their city apartments if rents could be more affordable. As living costs keep increasing in Greater Boston's urban core, many will be priced out of the city. Could compact living be a viable solution? How do you fund enough of such developments so that they become truly affordable? How do you alleviate current zoning constraints on minimum housing sizes?

Thinking about these questions, I couldn't help but remember moments from the Shi Ku Men: the banter of our neighbors next to the clothesline full of drying laundry, the melodic Chinese opera playing on the radio next door, and the aroma of meals being prepared and shared. Living small will require us to share with others, but that's also how we get to experience so much more. ■

**AERON HODGES** designs high-density urban housing at ADD Inc, now with Stantec. She is the co-founder of WHAT'S IN, a research group looking for affordable urban living solutions.



## OFFICE SPACE, THE SEQUEL

by Shawn Hesse

When sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined the term "third place" to describe the coffee shops, cafés, pubs, and public squares that are not home (first place) and not work (second place) but still integral parts of our lives, the Compaq SLT/286 laptop weighed 14 pounds and cost \$5,399.

A lot has changed since 1989. New technology enables us to be truly mobile (a MacBook Air weighs just over two pounds today and costs \$900). Demographics have changed, too: According to an annual survey by Johnson Controls, 79 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds want to be mobile rather than static workers. No wonder the distinction between "third places" and workplaces has become so blurred. And now that Starbucks offers wireless phone charging, working from the corner coffee shop is more feasible and desirable than ever.

Still, working from a coffee shop definitely has its downsides: no conference rooms, no private phone calls, talking to others is typically limited to "Is this seat taken?" Plus you have to pay for the coffee just to get Internet access. Cue co-working spaces such as the one I work out of—Workbar. Co-working offers the opposite of the Starbucks experience: You pay a membership fee, schedule the use of shared conference rooms and private phone booths, collaborate openly with your neighbors, and drink all the free coffee you want.

Co-working spaces serve as a blend of a second and third place that meets both professional and social needs. During my search to find a location for our Cambridge branch office, I toured multiple co-working spaces throughout Boston. As an architect, I immediately noticed the way the design of the space supported (or, in some cases, hindered) the promise of co-working to provide a flexible work environment that enables cross-fertilization of companies and ideas.

Some of the less successful ones look a lot like traditional offices, with glass walled offices lining the perimeter of the floor and a large communal space in the center. Others even use traditional cubicle-style workstations (shudder). The most successful spaces create a sense of openness and equality, and the furniture supports collaboration and community



by removing barriers between individuals.

As with all architecture, there is a play between the static, built form and how the space is used. When synchronized, the effects of both can be amplified. Ideal co-working spaces aren't just designed to promote interaction; the culture of community is consciously built through events and programming. Our firm, emersion DESIGN, has directly benefited from this. We have hosted a series of events in collaboration with Workbar and other co-worker organizations to promote sustainability, civic engagement, community building, and even zombie preparedness.

According to *Forbes*, there are more than 260,000 people currently working from spaces just like Workbar. That number was fewer than 10,000 just five years ago. As technological advances continue to reduce the number of cables necessary for us to work at a fixed *somewhere*, co-working spaces seem poised to change the way we think about our traditional second place. ■

**SHAWN HESSE** leads the Cambridge office of emersion DESIGN, a sustainability consulting, architecture, interiors, and engineering practice with offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Cincinnati.

## TRAFFICKING IN LUXURY

by Phil Primack

**Compared to other states**, Massachusetts has been wary of public-private partnerships to meet the transportation needs that keep growing in inverse proportion to available funding. But with proposals percolating to privatize two key traffic points, and an anything-but-taxes new governor knowing he has to find infrastructure fixes, privatization may be about to move up the Bay State agenda.

The idea of contracting with profit-seeking entities to operate roads and other public operations has been around for decades—as has the often polarized debate about the process. Supporters see public-private partnerships as an infrastructure savior, enabling the supposedly more efficient and better-financed private sector to build and even operate costly projects. Opponents blast them as tax-dollar giveaways to unaccountable corporations that fail to deliver promised financial and other benefits while enriching themselves. Each side has its poster projects: Foes point to Chicago's 2008 privatization of its parking meters, while supporters

cite the more recent \$1 billion Port of Miami tunnel project.

As usual, truth drives down the middle lane. Decades of experience, positive and negative, have made both the public and private sides much more sophisticated in how they consider and negotiate these partnerships. Chicago, for example, got \$1.15 billion when it leased its parking meter operation to a private company, but officials there probably now wish they hadn't locked the city into a 75-year deal that requires it to reimburse the vendor whenever it closes a street for repairs, storms, or other purposes.

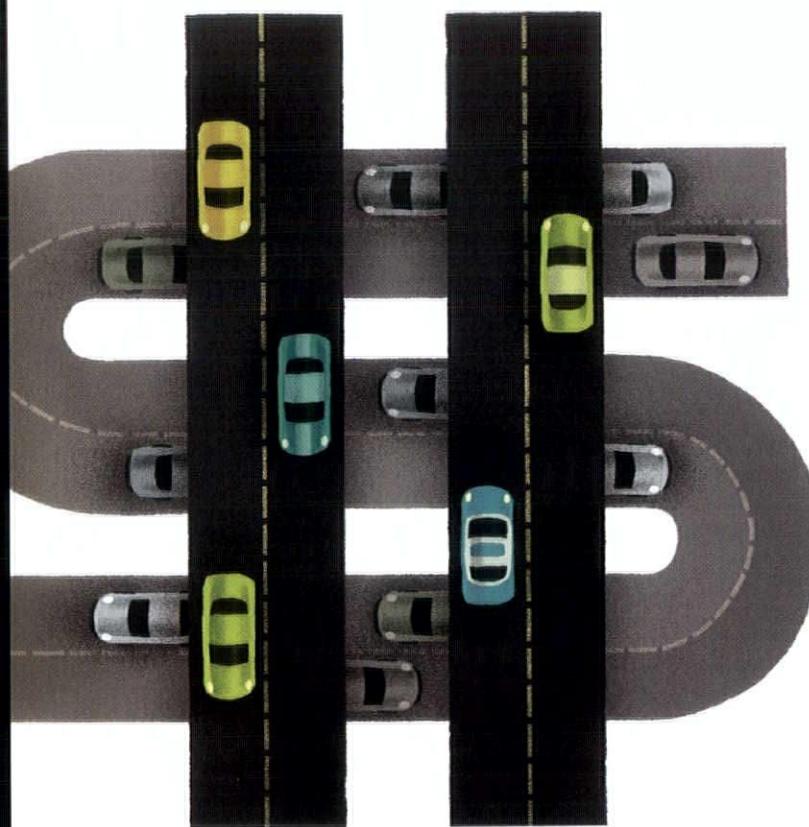
Two pending proposals in Massachusetts may show how well the players have learned such lessons.

Under one plan before the state's Public-Private Partnership Oversight Commission, created as part of the state's 2009 transportation reform bill, private investors would collect toll revenue to build a special travel lane along nine miles of congested Route 3 between Braintree and Norwell. (The state would remain responsible for maintenance.) The other proposal—much less formed so far, and with significant public opposition—calls for a third crossing over the Cape Cod Canal. Former Governor Deval Patrick wanted to advance at least one privatization proposal before he left office, and the state Department of Transportation says it will issue “requests for information” for both the Route 3 and bridge proposals this spring, with likely support from the new administration of Governor Charlie Baker.

If they move forward, both plans will ignite one of the biggest flash points sparked by road privatization, namely that it creates a two-tier transportation system, producing better travel options for people able to afford them, whether a Route 3 “Lexus lane” or a “Beamer bridge” to the Cape. Critics also contend that policies that make driving even more attractive conflict with efforts to encourage public transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Advocates counter that all drivers, including those stuck in regular, nontoll lanes, benefit from less congestion, which also reduces pollution.

The arguments are old, but the urgency of transportation needs and the Commonwealth's severe capital crunch are not. And that means public-private partnership polemics may soon be flying in a political theater near you. ■

PHIL PRIMACK is a Medford-based writer, editor, and consultant on policy issues.



## BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

by Michael S. Dukakis

**Thousands of visitors** coming to Boston these days remark on what a beautiful city it has become. And it is, with one conspicuous exception: We are being assaulted by a rapidly growing collection of commercial billboards, street furniture, bus shelters, and—worse still—flashing electronic billboards that seem to be a clear violation of Lady Bird Johnson's Highway Beautification Act. In a city like Boston, with its superb architectural and planning communities, this is difficult to understand.

Moreover, many of the sites for this visual pollution are on public property, especially that owned by the MBTA, even when they are strongly opposed by the communities in which they are located. Several years ago the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the T did not have to comply with local zoning laws. As a result, more than 200 billboards have gone up on T property when there were none—deliberately so—when I left the governor's office.

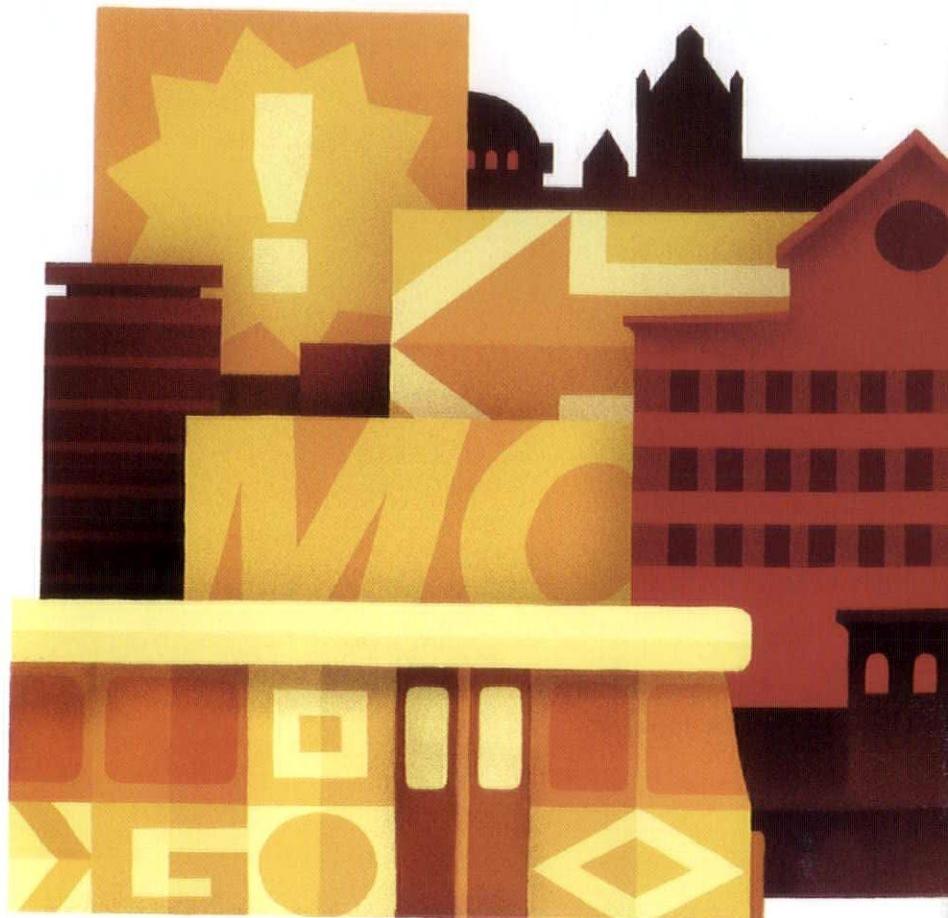
If you don't believe me, drive down I-93 from the north and take a good look at the 16 massive billboards that greet you as you approach Boston. There are so many that you have to look hard to find the skyline. They aren't there because the city of Somerville wants them. They are there because the land on which they sit happens to be T property and is therefore fair game for the T's advertising campaigns.

Approaching Boston on the Southeast Expressway is, if anything, worse, and we will soon be greeted there—as we are now on the north—by digital billboards flashing their messages as motorists try to navigate a difficult and often dangerous route into town.

Buses and streetcars are fair game, too. I never allowed advertising on the outside of vehicles during my administrations. Now, it is often a "wrap"—the entire vehicle is nothing but a rolling billboard covered with commercial advertising.

How has this been permitted to happen in the state that led the way nearly a hundred years ago, when the 1917 state constitutional convention passed a specific amendment making it crystal clear that the Commonwealth had the right to regulate billboards? And why is our public transportation agency seemingly using every available inch of its space for commercial advertising?

A few years ago, the T even opted to cover its



street cars on Huntington and Commonwealth Avenues with liquor ads, apparently designed to encourage all those students along both avenues to drink even more. Finally, then-Representative Martin Walsh and Kitty Dukakis persuaded Governor Deval Patrick, to his credit, that it was time to stop. The liquor ads have disappeared, but the rest is getting worse.

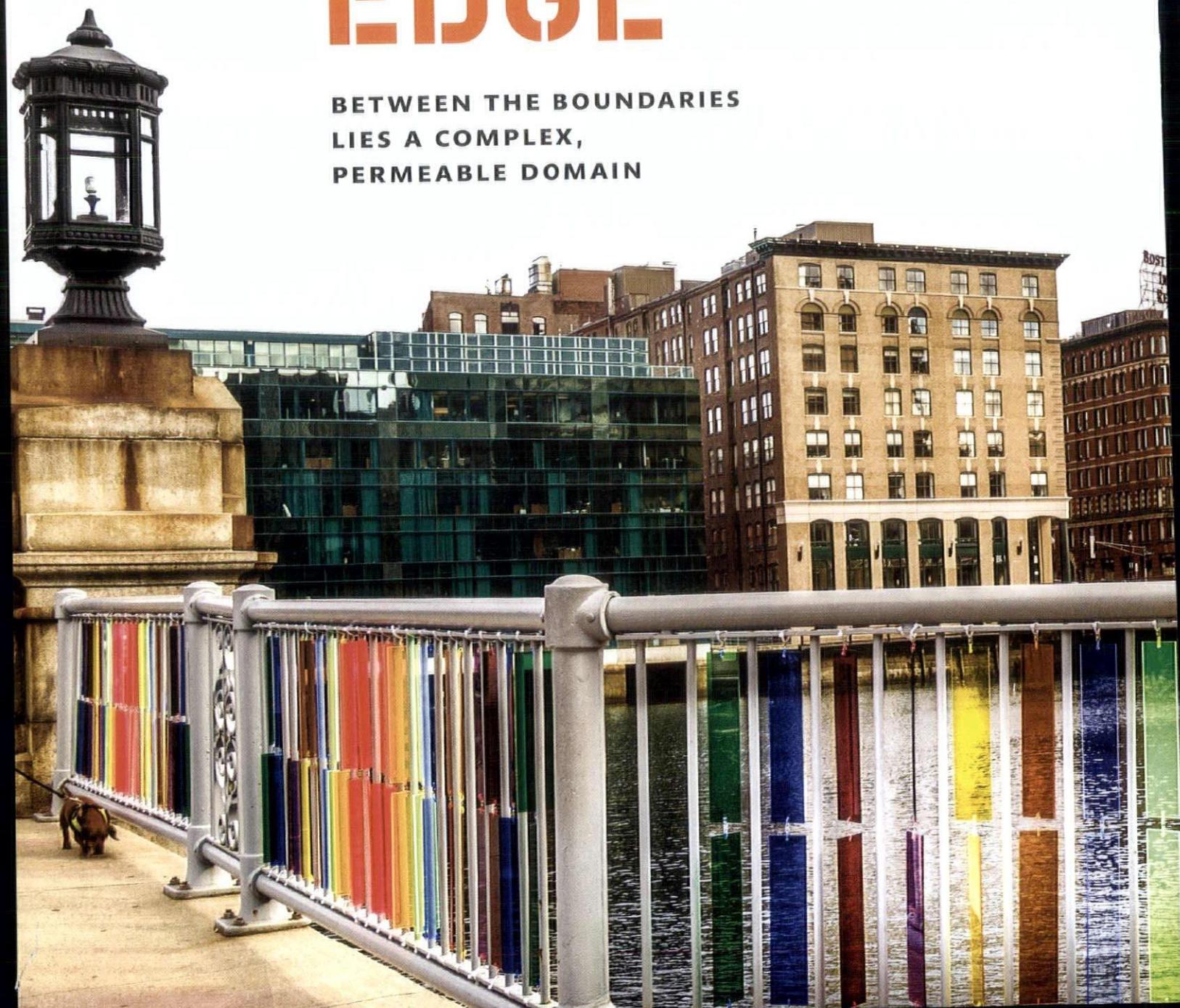
We took a South Station that was falling apart back in the 1970s and turned it into a magnificently restored transportation terminal. But have you been there lately? I am honored that the legislature and Governor Patrick named it for me. But that glorious hall is now littered with hanging advertising banners. The front entrance that used to lead directly into the great hall now features escalators to a second-floor cvs, and you can't even see the great hall from the entrance.

There are better ways to generate revenue for the T and the Commonwealth than plastering the state with this stuff. Where are Boston's architects, and why aren't they raising hell about this? ■

**MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS** is a former governor of Massachusetts and currently professor of political science at Northeastern University.

# THE WATER'S EDGE

BETWEEN THE BOUNDARIES  
LIES A COMPLEX,  
PERMEABLE DOMAIN



by Steven G. Cecil AIA ASLA

**The physical dialogue** between the public realm and the private realm forms our cities. In simple terms, the “public realm” consists of places where anyone can go; the “private realm” is available by invitation only. Designers respond to the evolving cultural boundary between these two realms by creating buildings, spaces, and connecting infrastructures that directly shape our urban experience. They make the public/private boundaries visible.

Polarized views fill the air within significant territorial struggles about which places *should* be public or private. The interplay pervades—and sometimes bedevils—the regulation, funding, and design of urban projects. Professionals and their clients devote substantial time and resources negotiating workable boundaries.

But complex urban communities do not always fit simple public/private distinctions. We experience layered and permeable edges between these realms. In fact, we can find a third and more foggy realm, comprising quasi-public places and spaces. Boston’s waterfront is an emerging case in point.

Take a walk along the urban waterfront and look around. At first, the public/private boundary seems perfectly clear. You can plop down on a bench in the small park (public) where Central Wharf used to be, at the foot of an office building where tenants have spectacular views (private). You can look into an inviting street-level seafood restaurant—great if you have the appetite and the bucks—but is it a public place? You can watch families with gangs of excited kids parade into the New England Aquarium after paying a fee, which helps support this outstanding nonprofit institution. Is it public, or private?

Advocates frequently seek clear distinctions in these circumstances. Some might lay claim to waterfront views they enjoy. Public ambitions may extend to access and use of the land at no cost, without regard for private title. The private advocates typically cite the economic potential of sought-after waterfronts, with buildings for living, working, shopping, eating, and entertainment. Private fishing, boating, and shipping companies also claim the water’s edge, arguing that working waterfronts are scarce and diminishing resources for water-dependent enterprise.

The contrast between public and private places is a touchstone of urban design, often portrayed with stark distinctions in a figure/ground relationship. The iconographic diagram of this duality is the Nolli Map, named for architect and surveyor Giambattista Nolli’s 1748 chart of Rome. Nolli’s elaborate engraving recorded footprints of all spaces behind closed doors



as darkened shapes. This was the private realm and formed the “figure” parts of the map. He left uncolored all other exterior and publicly accessible street-level interior spaces. This revealed the public realm available for civic life, picturing the “ground” that contrasted the private city.

The plan hints at the volumes of the buildings and the spaces that they define. In the mind’s eye, Nolli provides a pedestrian’s perspective of a balanced composition that includes rich sequences of streets and plazas connecting the accessible interiors of churches and civic structures. But we can also invert this perspective and imagine being within the houses, palaces, and buildings that conceal the private life of the city. The seductive map conveys a compelling vision of clear, artfully shaped boundaries between public and private worlds.

Maybe 18th-century Rome really was like that, but Boston is not. This city was derived from a colonial heritage and has evolved with intertwined gradations of rights, places, and spaces.

Key legal frameworks date from prerevolutionary times. The Massachusetts Bay Company launched the colony as a commercial venture, after all, and did not separate “public” and “private” as we might today. Open waterways were needed by everyone, so the Commonwealth held all rights below high tide for public benefit. But there was a quasi-public zone above low tide. Under the Colonial Ordinances of 1641–47, the intertidal zones could be privately owned, but the Commonwealth

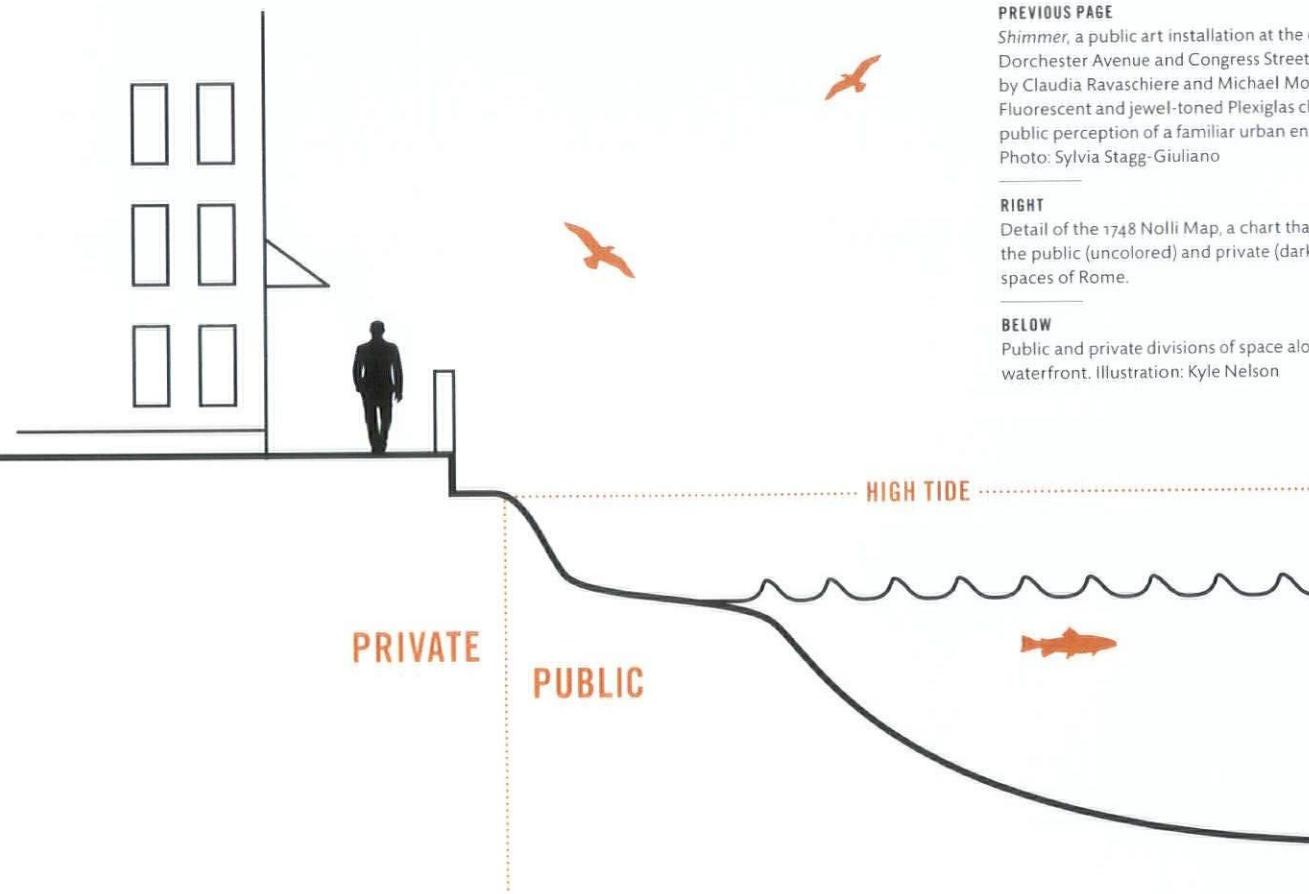
preserved limited public rights for access to the water for fishing, fowling, and navigation. Above high tide, land was available for private ownership and use.

This mix of public and private rights along the waterfront evolved over the centuries and is even more complex today. In 1866, Massachusetts defined public rights along waterfronts in Chapter 91, a state law. Further regulations and interpretations dramatically expanded the role of Chapter 91 over the past 40 years.

For example, limited public waterfront rights remain within the presumed location of many historic tide lines, even if those lines were obliterated by urban fill and the land is now private. When fill covered tidal flats at the Fan Pier of South Boston more than a century ago, quasi-public rights remained. But our right to fishing, fowling, and navigation has been radically reinterpreted as a right for the public to enjoy private waterfront land for less water-dependent uses—including effective rights for wining, dining, exercising, enjoying jazz concerts, or simply taking in the view. We may still hold the right to take a potshot at a passing seagull, but legal advice should be sought before trying that out.

Private rights also persist on some properties if approvals and licenses secure appropriate public access. So private sector funds create layers of both public and quasi-public spaces and activities as a condition of the private development.

We now have special regulations to implement quasi-public



#### PREVIOUS PAGE

*Shimmer*, a public art installation at the corner of Dorchester Avenue and Congress Street in Boston, by Claudia Ravaschiere and Michael Moss. Fluorescent and jewel-toned Plexiglas changed the public perception of a familiar urban environment. Photo: Sylvia Stagg-Giuliano

#### RIGHT

Detail of the 1748 Nolli Map, a chart that shows the public (uncolored) and private (darkened) spaces of Rome.

#### BELOW

Public and private divisions of space along Boston’s waterfront. Illustration: Kyle Nelson



spaces and uses, leading to obscure technical language and convoluted standards that have provoked innovative solutions. For example, “Facilities of Public Accommodation” (FOPAS) allow people to enjoy the waterfront, even if they are private establishments—like that seafood restaurant near the Aquarium. “Special Public Destination Facility” (SPDFS) are private or public interior facilities that are particularly attractive to the public with civic programming—like the Aquarium and other museums. “Offsets” provide public benefits to balance the presumed detriment if a project exceeds certain dimensions: so shadows from a tall building like the one being constructed at Lovejoy Wharf could be offset with space provided on the ground level for a visitor’s center. These are just tips of the regulatory iceberg.

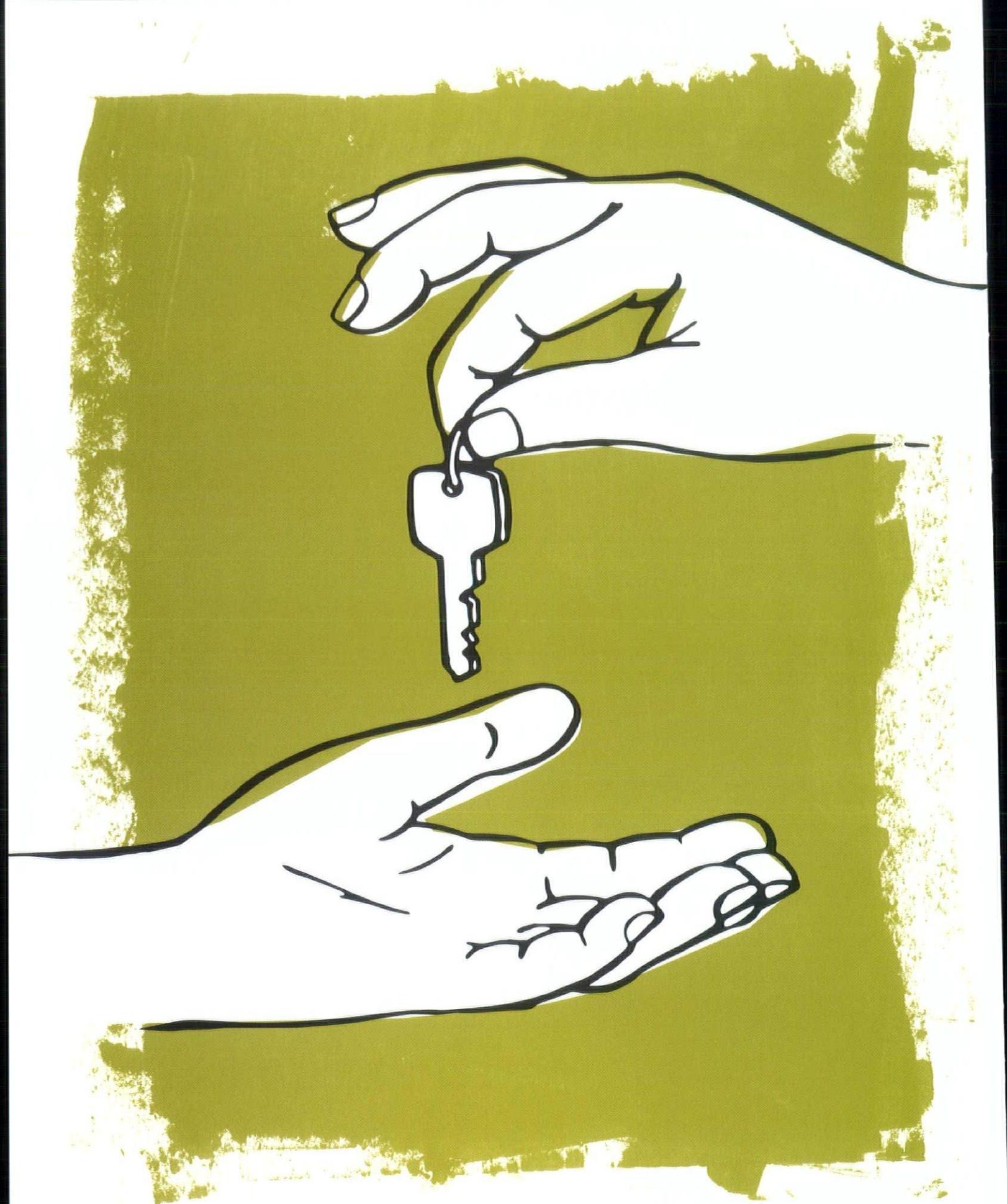
People may ask whether all of these really constitute public benefits. The answer is no. Some of these are *quasi-public* benefits recognizing *quasi-public* rights. A kind of shared ownership breeds hybrid places.

What does this all mean for the urban environment and its form? A single segment of Boston's waterfront shows the results: Atlantic Wharf is a mixed-use development with offices and residences along Boston's Fort Point Channel that includes both historic restoration and a 395-foot tower. The project has designed, packaged, and paid for both public and quasi-public amenities onsite and around the Harbor. The project provides for the Boston Society of Architects' ground

floor information center (a FOPA). There is a waterside restaurant with outdoor seating, a wide-open public plaza and publicly available restrooms (more FOPAs). A dock serves water taxis and private vessels (a water-dependent FOPA). The project helped fund a park next to the Children's Museum (which is an SPDF). Atlantic Wharf supports programs organized by the nonprofit Friends of the Fort Point Channel, ranging from live music, temporary art in the water and on the shore, exercise programs, and other activities.

Boston's harbor serves as a useful point of reference, but you will find the foggy third realm of shared public/private placemaking as a fundamental part of urban design in most communities, if you look for it. These are the office building and hotel lobbies where you can take shortcuts between streets when it rains. These are the public entertainment events filling Copley Square for a few hours on stages erected by corporate stewards of public relations budgets. These are the well-designed bus stops owned by a company that puts slick ads on the sides to pay for them, placed on public sidewalks serving public buses. These are the cafés spilling tables out onto the sidewalks of Boston (or Paris, or Rome), making money for their owners. It's the thick spatial edge between public and private.

It's not exactly the Nolli Map, but it seems like a good way to build a city. ■



# YOURS, MINE, OURS

THE SHARING ECONOMY NUDGES OWNERSHIP ASIDE

by Diane Georgopoulos FAIA

**The act of sharing opens a door into our interior life**, revealing a self that we usually don't access in our day-to-day experience. When we share ourselves or our possessions, we lay bare our vulnerability. Risking our self-image or a possession imbued with personal significance is what makes these moments memorable and carries us over a threshold as we experience the new domains created within the sharing economy.

That wash of good feeling about sharing sweeps us into these new, still-evolving forms, challenging long-held notions of ownership. Apps expand access to information and services, connecting us to sources that satisfy what we need or desire. The generation that grew up protesting conservative postwar institutions spawned a period of vast consumption of resources as well as a younger generation that is now inventing its own counterculture.

Common threads of the sharing economy are the embrace of an entrepreneurial spirit, an awareness of resource scarcity, and the abandonment of nonfunctioning institutions as sources of leadership and innovation. Some examples include food trucks that share public spaces and create lively dining options; racks of Hubway bikes and Zipcars parked on city streets available for hourly rental; and,

most recently, Uber and Lyft, defended as a cheaper convenience by a population of new users unconcerned about the disruption of the taxi business model. In the generational transformations natural to changing priorities and values in American society, the sharing economy is recalibrating how we consume resources and services.

Airbnb, where private property is rented out to a paying public, is causing a stir among condominium owners. Investor-owners in developments without strict, enforceable regulations about the minimum length of rentals are in conflict with occupant-owners seeking to control the stability of their community and access to their private property. Occupant-owners see high turnover as a potential for higher condo fees, less familiar faces, and a more transient community. Investor-owners, however, see Airbnb as the highest and best use of their unit, maximizing its value through short-term rentals in addition to normal appreciation.

As a culture, we have adapted to smartphones, tablets, and laptops that allow us to access the services of the new sharing economy anywhere in the world. At the same time, these devices help us minimize large personal collections of books, records, and photographs. Our mobility is enhanced tremendously: We can pack our charger and take our favorite things with us wherever we go.

Similarly, social media link us with our friends anywhere in the world without leaving the comfort of our bedroom. Anyone can “connect,” the chance encounter is no longer coincidence but engineered. Staying home after work is a matter of a choice rather than the outcome of not having made plans. Fewer possessions and social networking have influenced the actual square footage of new micro-units, where shared gathering lounges are designed in a nod to the reduced need for individual living rooms. In a previous generation, the micro-unit model was the single-room-occupancy or residential hotel that included social spaces such as dining rooms and lounges. Real estate movers and shakers are sanguine about renewing this housing option, where higher rent for less space is a winning combination.

The sharing economy is felt in the workplace, too. The private office, long the symbol of privilege in a hierarchical organization, now feels like a relic. Office interiors have been replaced by shared resources, including movable workstations, glass walls, work bars, and team rooms. All these speak to an attitude of openness, of paperless and transparent organizations. Team leaders circulate among employees or use standing desks to overlook their charges. Technology and cloud sharing has hatched a generation of “consultants.” You see them in coffee-houses and fast food restaurants all over the city. Cheap by any

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commercial real estate standard, these independent workers appropriate seats for their private enterprise with no more rent to pay than the price of a cup of coffee. Telecommuters or laptop cowboys who may need the periodic support of the "mother ship" come into a "hotel space" in the office. Commercial-space needs diminish, and the flexibility to adapt to new projects is much less costly.

The sharing economy was taken to court in 2000 when Napster showed how the tech-savvy could appropriate music without paying royalties to artists or recording companies. Before the legal case was settled, hackers outsmarted the entertainment industry and forced it to rethink its distribution models. Twentysomething app inventors and clever hackers have acquired counterculture hero status and have been catapulted into the ranks of the super-rich, possibly without ever having owned a suit.

A trend among a younger cohort is placing higher value on experience than on ownership. There is a subculture, too, of "freegans," anti-consumerists, or dumpster divers who perceive their access to unearned goods as a legitimate exercise. They defend their actions by asserting that they are hurting no one and merely taking advantage of the surplus that exists and would otherwise go to waste.

Perhaps the most revolutionary example of the sharing

economy, however, is found in cases such as Kahn Academy and MOOCs, or massive open online courses. These are the wildflowers in education that have sprung through the cracks of ivy-covered walls. It remains to be seen what springs from the seeding of this fallow ground.

As entrepreneurs create modern models for businesses, cities grapple to create alternate models to finance the maintenance and upkeep of roads, buildings, transit systems, harbors, tunnels, and bridges whose operation is essential to commerce. Our infrastructure's decaying condition is irreconcilable with the unwillingness to bear the shared cost of repairs through traditional methods of taxation. The new strategy? Public/private partnerships that finance the maintenance and upgrading of necessary infrastructure.

Some find the sharing economy a refreshing break from relentless consumption. Others see reckless destruction of established business norms. Like a cat standing on the threshold looking in at the party, we feel a societal skittishness, perhaps defined by which generation we identify with, about embracing these new businesses until we know which will survive. What is inevitable is that today's innovators will spawn yet another generation that will create—and share—its own counterculture. ■



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# QUIET,



# PLEASE

FOR SOME OF US, SOLITUDE SUPPORTS LEARNING



by Laura Wernick FAIA

**I walk by William Rawn's Cambridge Public Library extension** twice a day on my way to and from work. I love the transparency of the south façade. It is sharp and crisp, and I can see right through to all of the exploring, socializing, reading, and working taking place within. When I go into the library for research or study, however, I tend to move quickly away from the openness of the new building into the old one. I find a semi-enclosed quiet spot away from the crowds, turn off social media, and get to work.

In the world of educational facilities, the buzzword over the last 10 years has been "collaboration," with the focus on shaping physical space to support students' cooperative efforts. Great energy has been put into designing classroom furniture to enhance students' ability to work together. Classrooms have been designed to allow students to easily share ideas, efforts, and experiences. Even the rise of the now-ubiquitous academic "learning commons," in place of the traditional library,

**LEFT AND ABOVE**  
Hoodini, part of the Chair Wear collection from the Dutch design studio Bernotat & Co, offers a moment of privacy wherever an occupant might need it.

Photos: Rogier Chang

came in part from the impetus to create more group or social learning spaces.

The seemingly indisputable logic behind all of this comes largely from the business world. As Malcolm Gladwell has written on his blog, "Innovation—the heart of the knowledge economy—is fundamentally social." Business tells us that innovation requires collaboration; therefore, we should be

Dear Mr. Babbage," he writes, "I am very much obliged to you for sending me cards for your parties, but I am afraid of accepting them, for I should meet some people there to whom I have sworn by all saints in heaven, I never go out."

Some research bolsters Cain's thesis even within the business world. In "The Brainstorming Myth," a *Business Strategy Review* article from 2000, organizational psychologist Adrian Furnham indicates that performance gets worse as group size increases. He writes, "If you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority."

Given that there is at least uncertainty over the benefits of collaboration, perhaps it is time to rebalance our thinking on the types of spaces students need to learn, to think, and to be creative. Are there at least some of us who need privacy and solitude to do our best work?

The Roeper School in Birmingham, Michigan is exploring that theory. Our firm, HMFH Architects, has been hired to design a new dining hall and library for this K-12 school for gifted students. The initial design solution called for infilling the courtyard of its doughnut-shaped building with a learning commons that included group study areas, social spaces, and food service. The proposed learning commons would open directly into the existing building through the renovation of the library. The initial concept included

## Are there at least some of us who need privacy to do our best work?

training our students to work in groups. As humans, this reasoning insists, we do better work when we know how to work together effectively in teams.

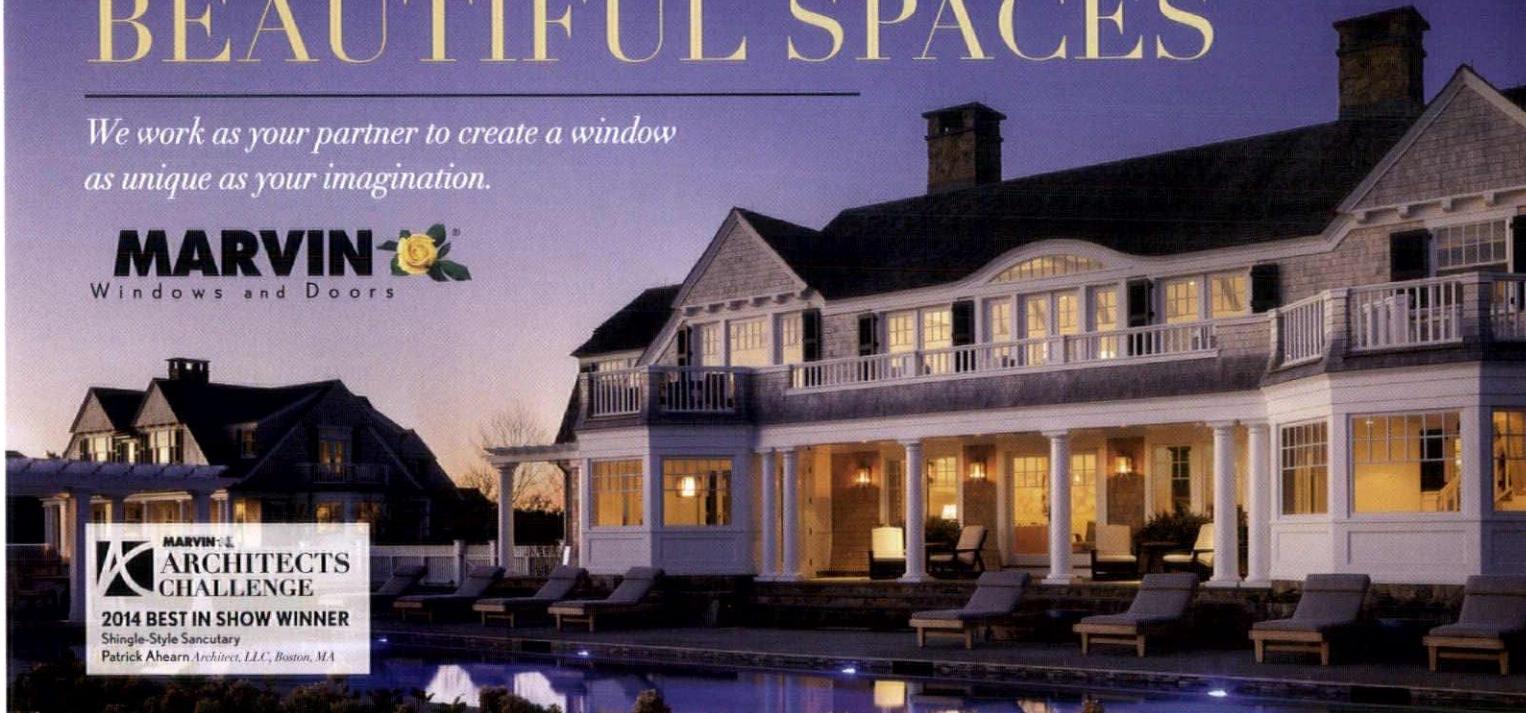
But what if Gladwell and the rest are wrong? In her best-seller *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, Susan Cain disputes the power of collaboration theory. As part of a longer argument defending her thesis, she describes innovators such as Steve Wozniak toiling alone in his cubicle night after night in his pursuit to create the first personal computer. She provides a letter from the solitude-loving Charles Darwin replying to a social invitation: "My

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a range of spaces for different-sized groups and types of activities, but the emphasis was on providing opportunities for collaboration.

The feedback was generally positive, but there were voices with a persistent question that we couldn't ignore. The voices were from the students, and they were asking, "Where do I go to be alone?"

Cain would not have been surprised by the question. She reports on a series of studies done in the 1950s at the University of California/Berkeley on the nature of creativity. "One of the most interesting findings, echoed by later studies, was that the more creative people tended to be socially poised introverts and 'not of an especially sociable or participative temperament.'" The students at Roeper, who tend to rank high in originality and curiosity, are likely to fall within that characterization. They were eager to have their renovated school support the way they operate and learn.

The revised approach for Roeper has become known as the "Continuum," and for obvious reasons. The Continuum will provide a spectrum of spaces from large active spaces at one end of the building through a range of small group areas and ultimately to quiet individual study spaces at the other end. The design provides opportunities for more enclosed rooms than originally envisioned, but the Continuum

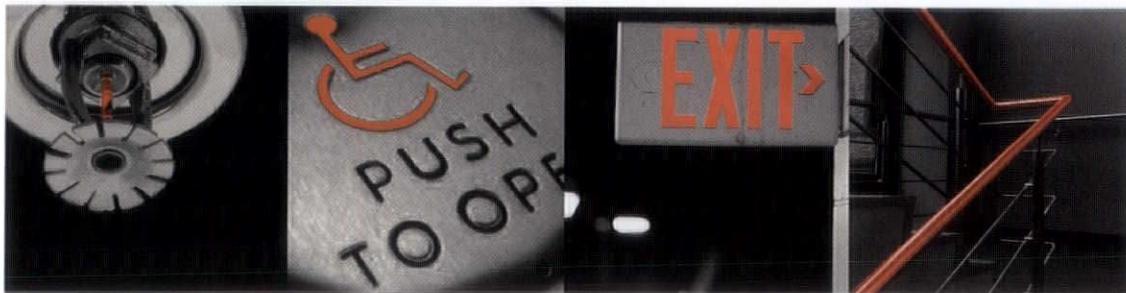
also allows students to enter at the level of activity and social interaction that feels right simply by deciding on which entrance to pass through.

Roeper is not alone. The recently opened Brody Learning Commons at Johns Hopkins University, designed by Shepley Bulfinch, is a careful mix of solitary and group study. Although it does have an open commons space for more collaborative activities, that is complemented by 15 small group rooms and the very popular Quiet Reading Room, which, according to Shepley's senior library planner, Kelly Brubaker, "is intended to promote an atmosphere for focused research and individual scholarship within the larger facility."

We live in an era that elevates openness and connections. We want our lives to be full of experience and information. We want our workplaces to provide plentiful opportunities for meaningful interactions. We expect our institutions to be open and transparent. We shape our architecture to those goals whether in our open office plans, the transparent façades of our high-rises, or in schools with high levels of interconnectedness. But maybe those students at Roeper are on to something. Maybe in the midst of all that openness and interaction we also need to be creating something else as well. Perhaps we need to be carving out both time and place for solitude. ■

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# BOSTON POPS

**THE CITY SHOULD COMPILE  
A DIRECTORY OF PUBLIC SPACES**

by Jerold S. Kayden

**Boston is one of many cities worldwide** that has deployed its land-use regulatory approval process to secure from developers so-called Privately Owned Public Spaces at office and residential towers. Legally required to be open to the public, these “POPS”—plazas, arcades, gallerias, rooftop terraces, and other outdoor and indoor spaces—are meant to be places to relax, meet with friends, eat a sandwich, read a book, take a snooze, or watch the city go by—all without having to pay for the privilege. Properly designed, accessorized, and maintained, POPS can richly complement a city’s public realm.

So how many POPS does Boston have? Where are they located? How many have seating, landscaping, public art, restrooms, or water fountains? When do they open and close? How many are indoor, heated, and air-conditioned? Are they operated at all times in compliance with applicable legal requirements? These questions have answers, but it is unlikely anyone knows them all. Most important, the public does not know the answers.

Some of us know where some POPS are. There is the 14th-floor observation deck at 470 Atlantic Avenue (Independence Wharf) and its interior seating area off the HarborWalk. There’s Foster’s Rotunda down the street on the 9th floor of 30 Rowes Wharf. Atlantic Wharf at 290 Congress Street has public seating and events. But what about the outdoor plazas scattered about the downtown commercial area? Was the Hancock tower’s observatory (now closed) ever a required POPS? Are some office lobbies actually indoor POPS?

This lack of knowledge is not unique to Boston. Local governments, civic organizations, members of the public, and even some owners remain

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**ABOVE**

Looking toward the city from the 14th-floor observation deck at Independence Wharf, Boston. Photo: Peter Tocci

unaware of their full POPS collections. This condition is slowly changing, however. Inspired by an ambitious project completed in 2000 in New York City, a number of cities have assembled information from relevant legal documents and other sources to answer questions about their cities' POPS. More recently, websites have sprung up to make the information accessible and usable to visitors.

POPS have a half-century history. In 1961, New York City introduced incentive zoning, offering to private developers a zoning bonus of 10 rentable office or residential square feet in return for one square foot of plaza. The developers and successor owners would legally own and maintain the plaza, but such spaces would have to be open to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A plaza was defined as a space free of obstruction, at least 750 square feet, and no more than five feet above nor more than 12 feet below street level.

The deal proved irresistible to developers, and most office towers in succeeding decades provided public spaces in exchange for zoning bonuses. Unfortunately, the spaces, while accessible to the public, offered little to no reason for the public to use them. Most were sterile and windswept, spaces that repelled rather than invited public use. In 1975, taking heed of research conducted by the urbanist William H. Whyte, New York's zoning began requiring better design, sunlight orientation, and the addition of amenities such as seating, lighting, landscaping, water fountains, and identifying signs. Unsurprisingly, the

quality and use of the spaces increased dramatically.

Yet problems persisted, including the vexing absence of comprehensive, legally accurate, and publicly available information about the nature and extent of New York City's POPS inventory. In the late 1990s, close to 40 years after the initiation of POPS, no one in the city could with confidence answer how many existed and what legal obligations governed their provision. It took the efforts of a scholar (full disclosure: me)—working in formal collaboration with New York's Department of City Planning and the Municipal Art Society of New York, a civic organization—to create a database describing in carefully researched legal detail each and every POPS built from 1961 to 2000. The forensic efforts were time-consuming and exhausting. Thousands of legal documents and plans were unearthed (sometimes literally) from the dusty bowels of the city's Department of Buildings. All were subject to post hoc legal and planning analysis. With decades-old, incomplete records, best guesses about the likely legal status of a space often had to suffice.

The results of the project resuscitated for New Yorkers an asset that many did not know they had. The raw numbers—503 POPS at 320 buildings—were instructive, but the database created the conditions for something far more valuable. Individuals could now visit and evaluate all the sites, which we did, finding that 37 percent of them ranged from very good to acceptable while 41 percent were, in a word, unusable.



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The other major finding was that roughly half the buildings with POPS had a space out of compliance with legal requirements, resulting in their privatization. Examples abounded of access denial, commercial activities spilling onto the space, and removal of required amenities such as seating. In 2000, contemporaneously with the publication of the full study in the book *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*, the city filed three civil lawsuits and eight administrative actions against owners for alleged violations of the legal requirements, now available for all to see, governing their spaces.

In the years since, other city planning departments or civic organizations have undertaken their own projects to assemble and publicize data about their public spaces. San Francisco, Seattle, and Toronto are among the better examples of creating and making available POPS data for public and professional consumption. But New York City boasts the most ambitious website anywhere (apops.mas.org), providing photographs, written profiles, site plans, and legal data for every space. Equally important, the website creates a digital space where members of the public can post comments, report problems, share photographs and videos, and even suggest redesigns for underperforming spaces.

So where does this leave Boston? Behind, to be sure, but remediable given the right attitude and hard work. A first step would involve a physical survey of the city, along with

discussions with knowledgeable individuals, to develop a list of possible outdoor and indoor spaces. Next would be an analysis of the legal documents governing the public approvals of the buildings to which the possible spaces are attached to determine whether, indeed, the spaces are required and, if so, what are the requirements. Synthesizing this analysis into a publicly available and usable format would complete the initial project. From there, programs for activating the spaces, along with monitoring and enforcement to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements, would be suddenly possible.

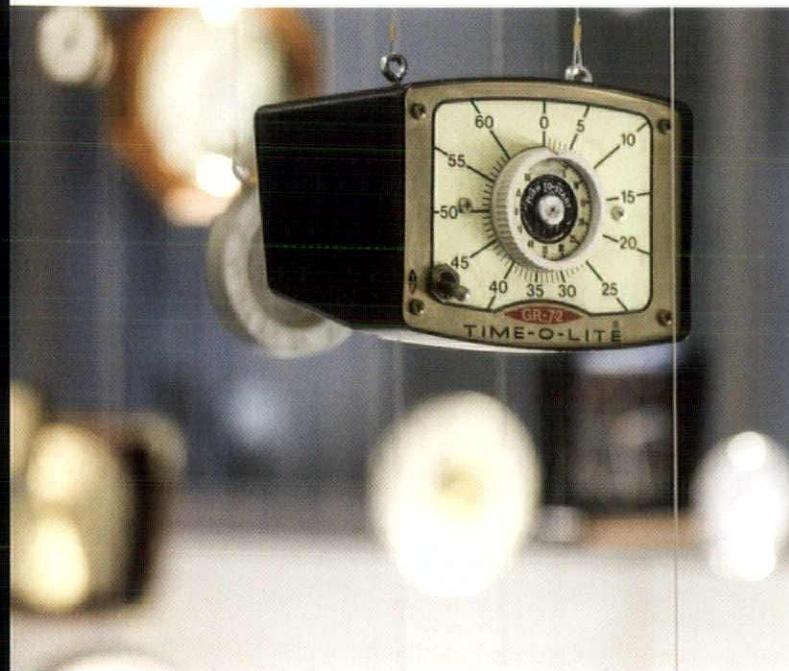
Whether Boston's city government takes on this project by itself or in partnership with civic organizations and interested researchers, it needs to make available for scrutiny the legal documents governing the public approvals received by developers. Some of these records are maintained by the city, others are held elsewhere, but they are all obtainable with the right spirit of transparency and cooperation. Only then can we have the appropriate debate about whether POPS, with their private owners, can ever be truly public spaces; what rights citizens hold in terms of using the spaces; whether the zoning deals for the spaces have yielded a worthy benefit; how existing spaces may be improved; and whether new ones should be encouraged. If this is done correctly, then when someone refers to the Boston POPS, at least some people may ask, "Do you mean the orchestra or public spaces in the city?" ■

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# ELEVATED ILLUSIONS



## ARBOR

Above the computer hub at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, almost 700 suspended timepieces are visible as an abstract composition from within the lab and from the street outside. When observed from one spot at the entrance, this 2014 array of timepieces optically morphs into a depiction of the scales of justice. *Arbor* expresses the interplay between the temporal and the judicial, grounded in an individual's experience of time and space.

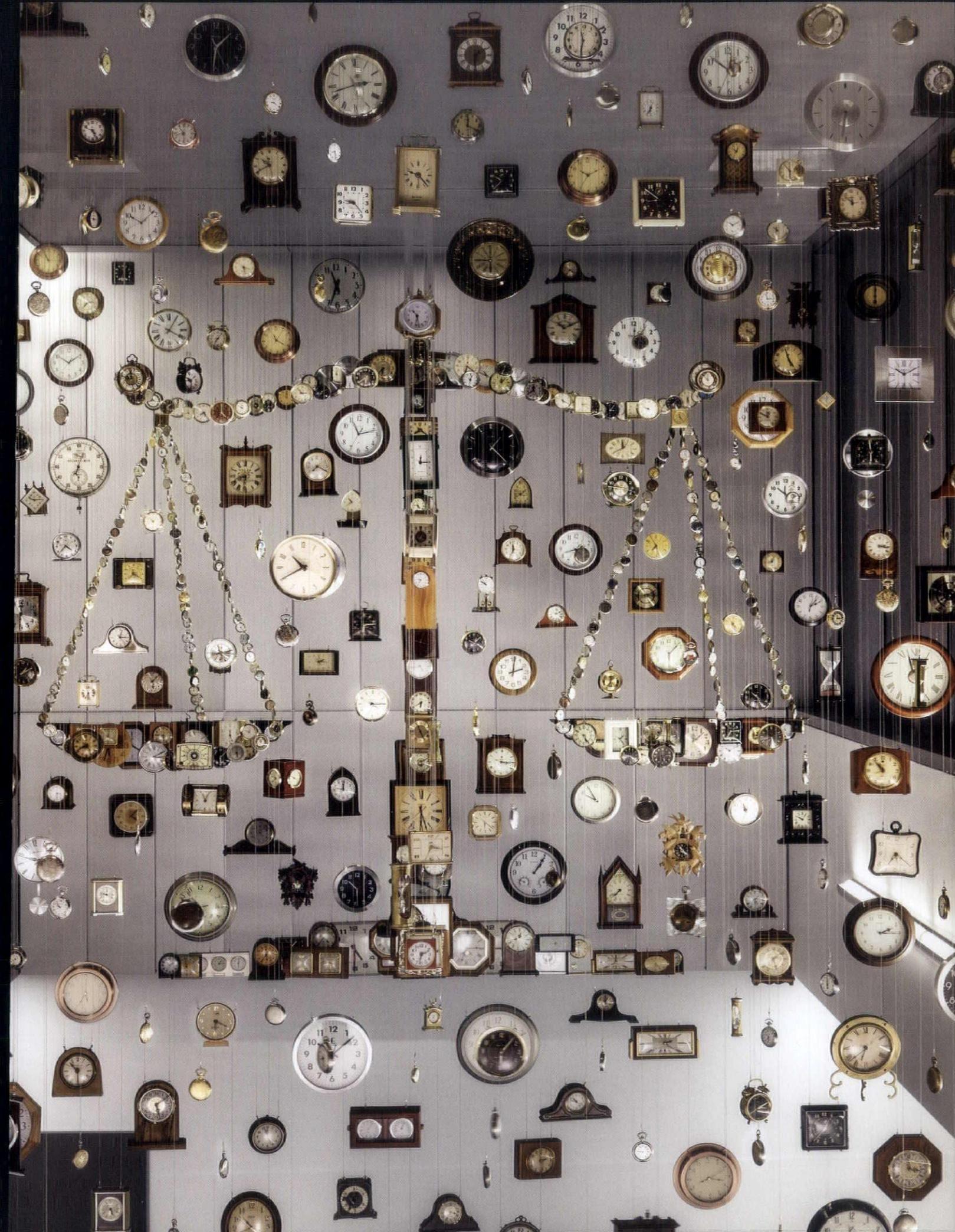
Site: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York City. Commissioned by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York; 17 feet high, 17 feet wide, 38 feet 8 inches deep; timepieces, stainless steel cable, steel.

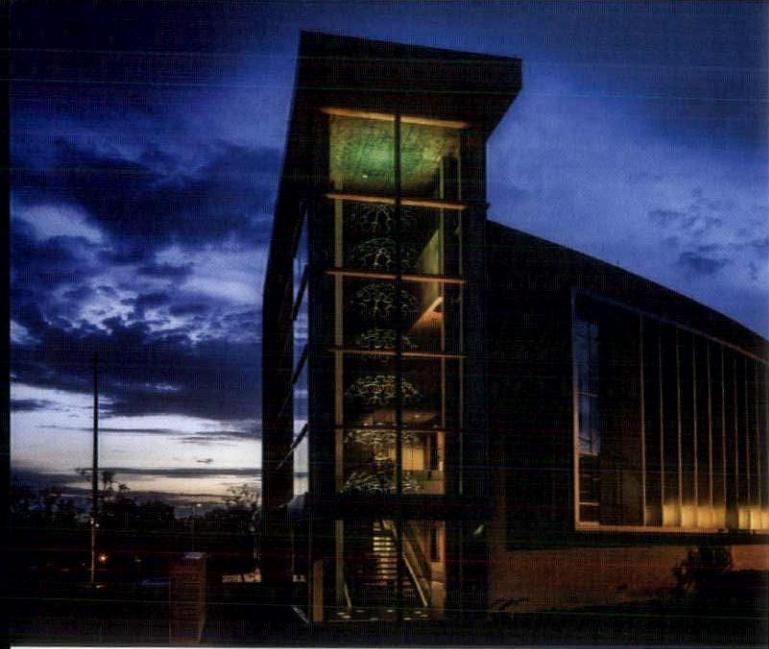
**A sculptor who designs** and installs large-scale work, Ralph Helmick has for the past three decades focused on creating artwork for public spaces. Many of his commissions—which range from airports to universities, courthouses to crime labs—feature hanging objects and metal fabrications that coalesce into an arresting tableau. The overall effect can seem at once fragile yet robust. “I used to make discrete objects; now I’m much more stimulated by the context,” he says. Indeed, Helmick’s best-known early work is 1984’s Arthur Fiedler Memorial on the Charles River Esplanade.

Two of his projects for forensic labs—*Exquisite Corpse* and *Pattern Recognition*—were publicly funded but are not readily viewable by the public, requiring special access. “They felt like private commissions,” says the Boston-area sculptor, “given how physically protected they were and how those experiencing them were a small subset of the general public.” In principle he prefers private commissions because “they’re inevitably more streamlined than publicly funded projects and perhaps even more ‘free,’ but maybe they haven’t resulted in my best work.”

Most public art, like architecture, is anchored to its site. “So much of American society is about looking for connections,” says Helmick. “As an artist, the challenge is figuring out which ideas fit into the public realm.”

—Fiona Luis

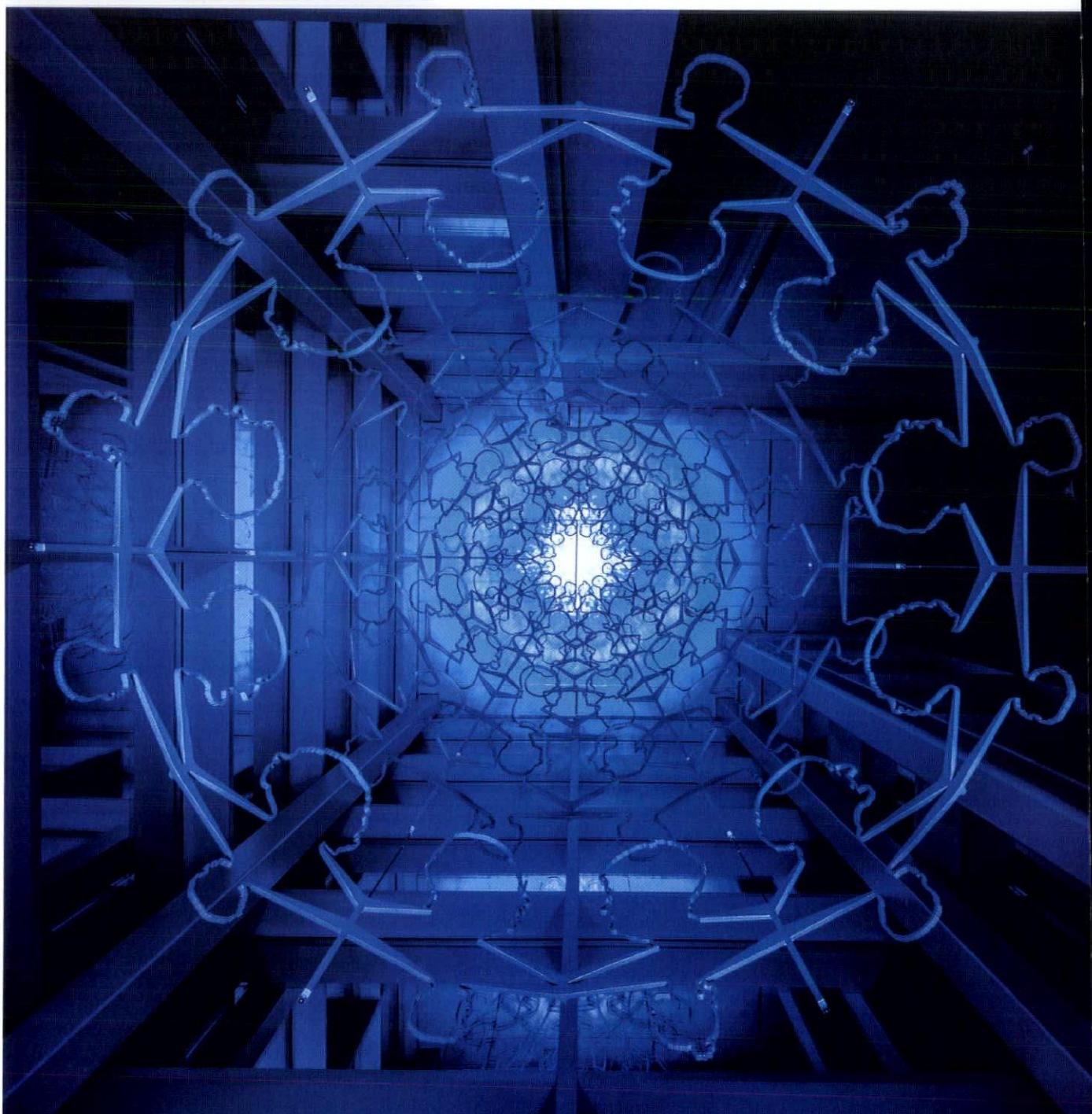


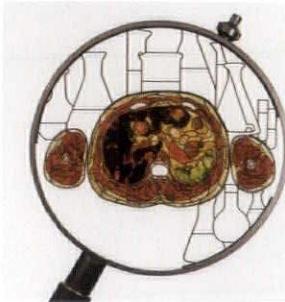
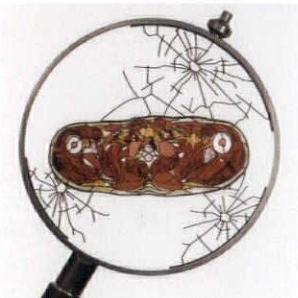
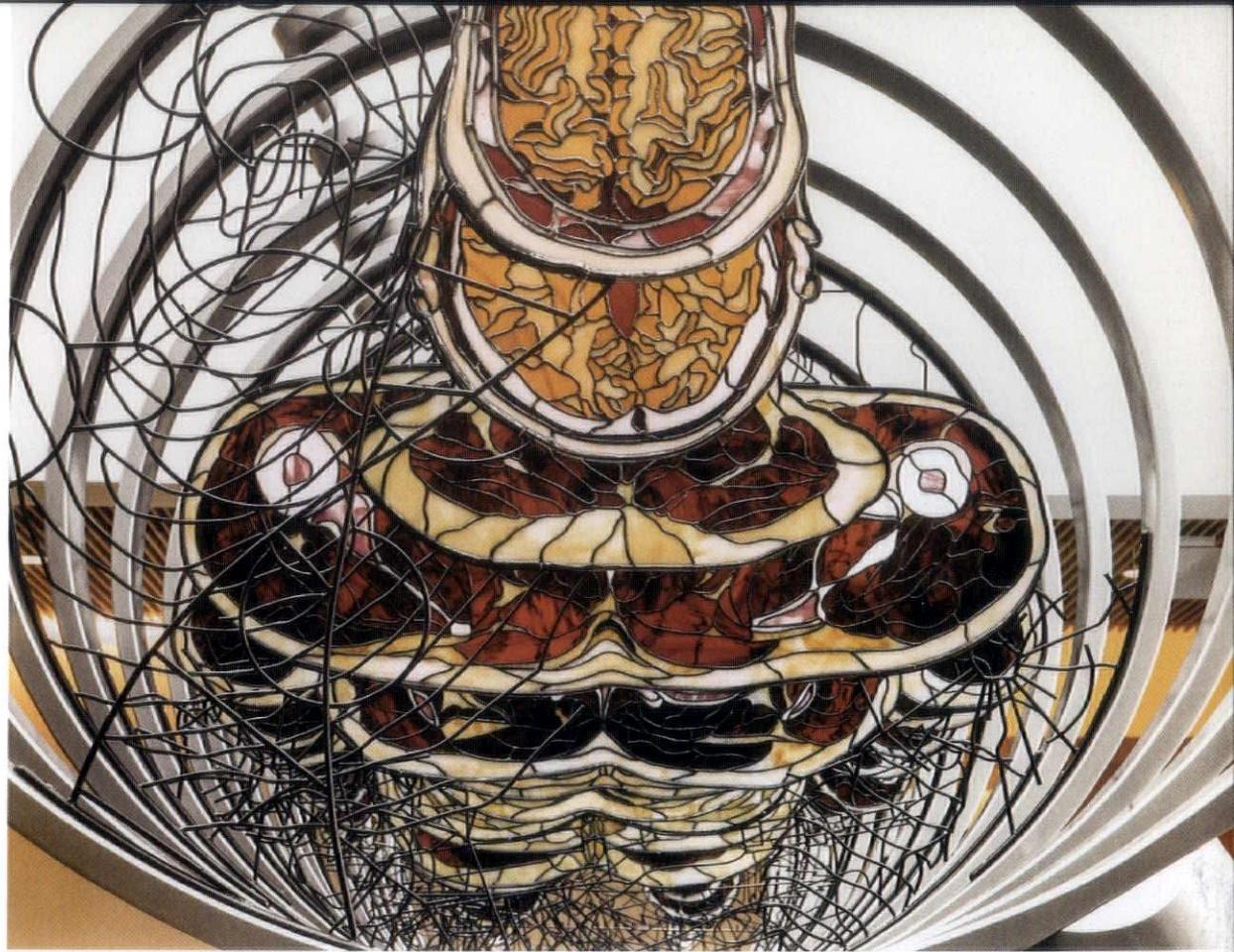


#### BLUE LINES

Seven metal rings of silhouettes of residents and police officers are suspended in the "lantern" of this 2010 police station. Viewed from below, the rings create a generational tunnel reflecting the seven stages of life. At night the sculpture comes alive from the street, the result of illumination from floor-mounted lights. The title derives from "thin blue line," a phrase that nods to the police force as a vital membrane separating civil society and criminal elements.

Site: Nashville Neighborhood Police Station, Fort Worth, Texas.  
Commissioned by Fort Worth Public Art; 29 feet high,  
6 feet diameter; silver powder-coated aluminum, LED lights.

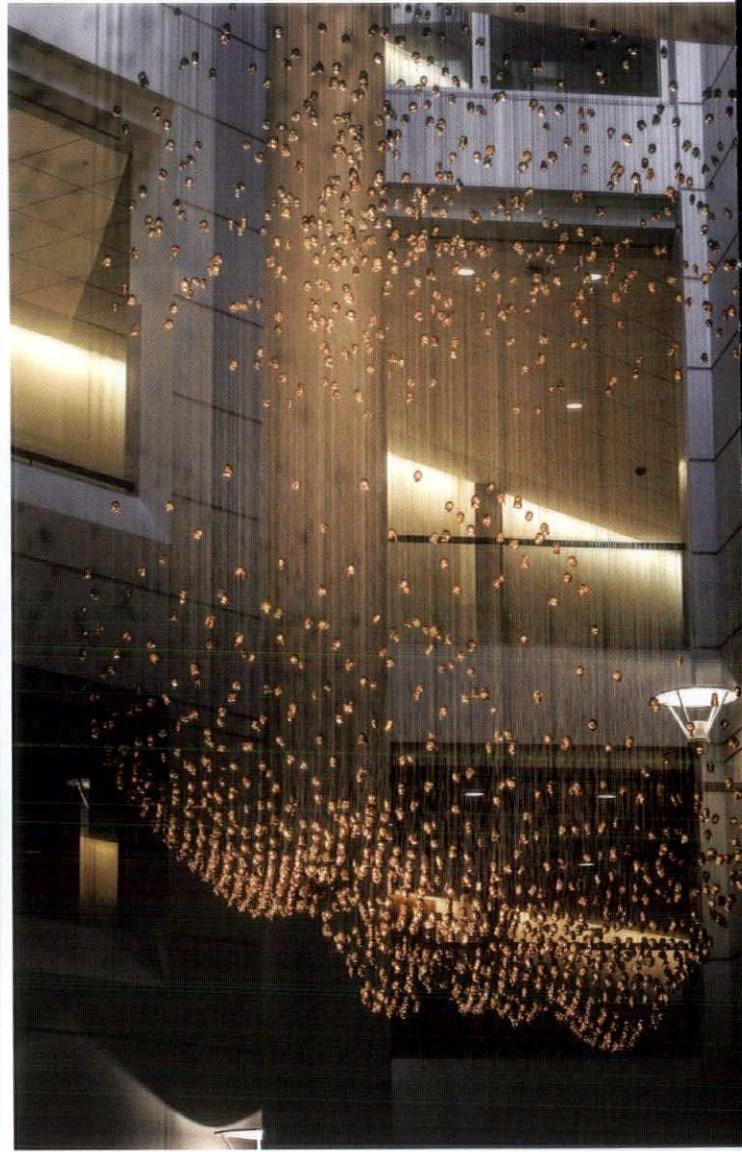




#### EXQUISITE CORPSE

Analysis, synthesis, and mortality are central to this 2004 artwork created for the state forensics laboratory of Minnesota. Nineteen giant aluminum "magnifying glasses" house two layers of imagery: stained-glass panels depicting cross-sections of human anatomy that collectively indicate the form of a recumbent male figure and welded metal filigrees holding the panels in place that refer to analytical techniques employed at the lab.

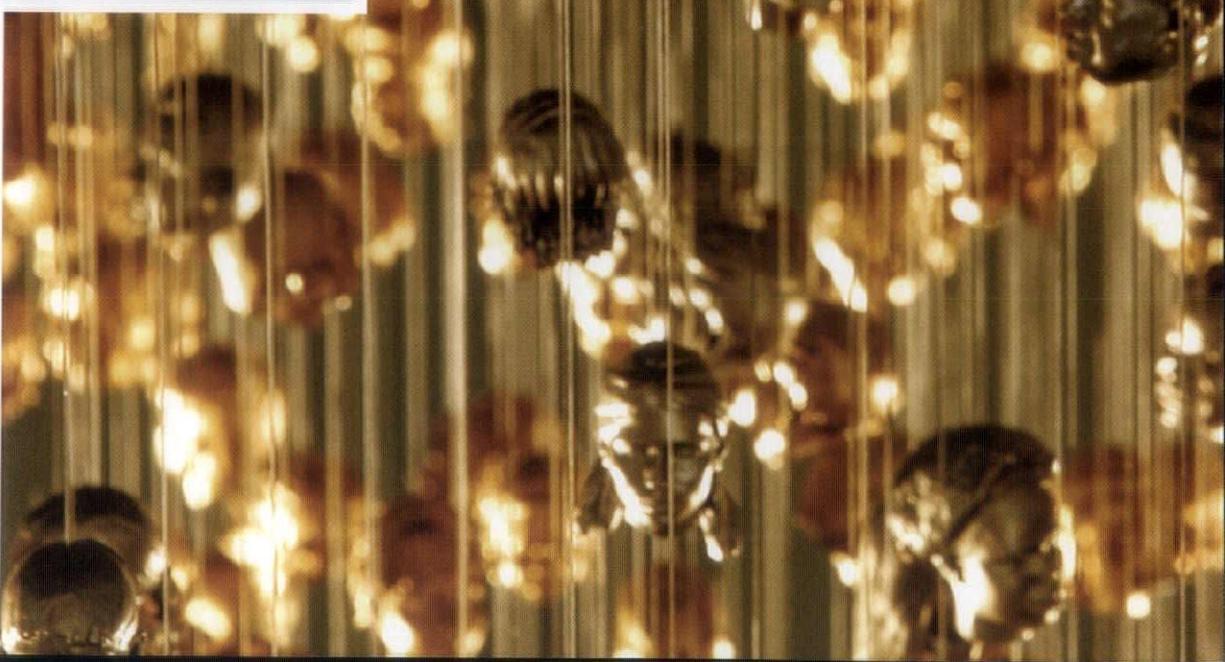
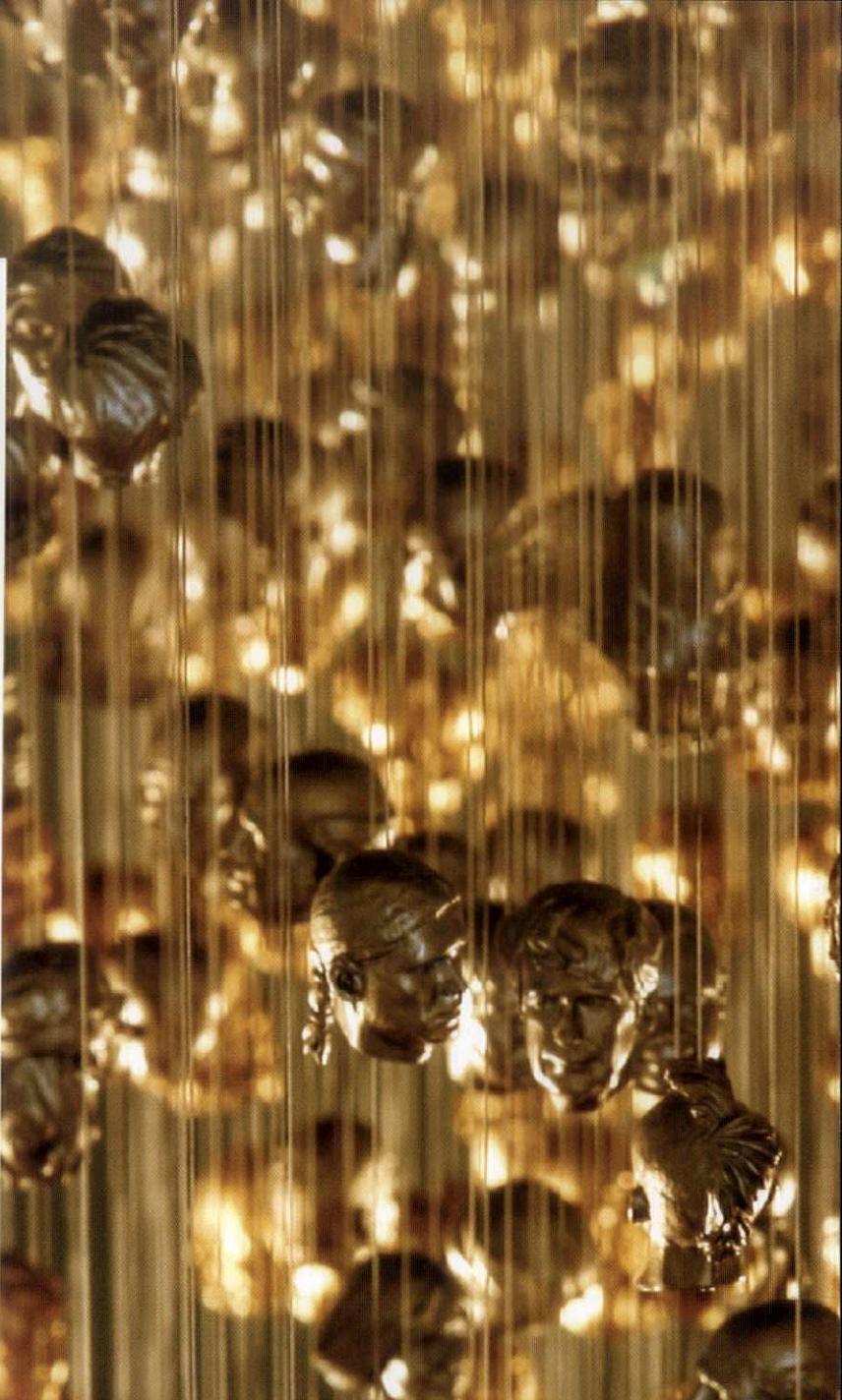
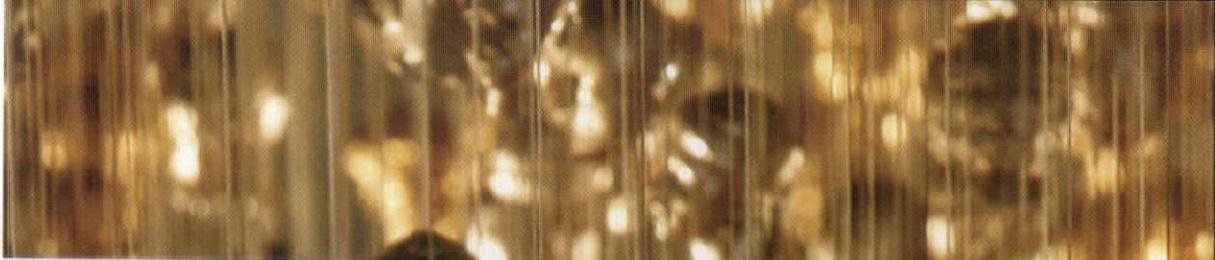
Site: Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Commissioned by the Minnesota Percent for Art Program. Collaboration with Stuart Schechter; 8 feet high, 5.5 feet wide, 26 feet deep; steel and stained glass.



#### PERSISTENCE OF VISION

The building blocks of this 2007 piece are pewter portraits of Charlotte citizens controlled by 1,600 motors. During the course of a week, the heads gradually move one by one to create a three-dimensional face, which then slowly reverts into a cloud. The following week another portrait builds, then dissolves. New faces are continually formed over time, from an elderly Latina to an African-American man, an Asian boy, a middle-aged Caucasian woman, and so on.

Site: Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Charlotte, North Carolina. Commissioned by the Arts & Science Council, Inc. Collaboration with Stuart Schechter; 36 feet high, 16 feet wide, 12 feet deep; pewter, steel cable, ballchain, steel, motors, processors. Photos: Will Howcroft





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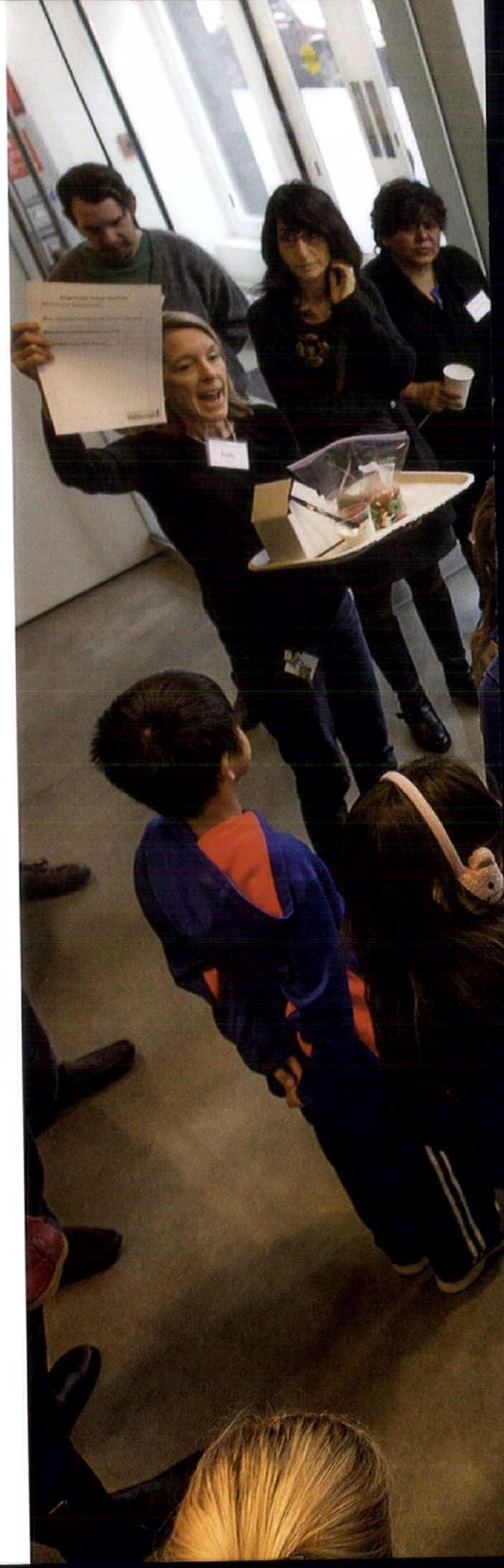
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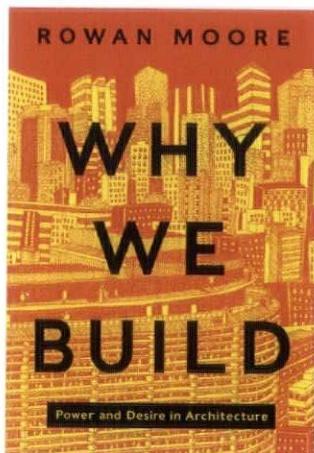
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# BOOKS



## Why We Build: Power and Desire in Architecture

Rowan Moore  
Harper Design, 2014  
Reviewed by William S. Saunders

When, in **Why We Build**, we read the sentence “Dictators and architects alike are driven by the desire to dominate and shape the world, and they like this quality in each other,” we know that the critic writing this has uncommon independence from the architects whose work he studies. So many other critics, to ensure that they have access to the architects and works they write about, cultivate friendships and positive evaluations that restrict their critical freedom. Not so Rowan Moore, architecture critic for *The Observer* in London and author of this audaciously muckraking book.

Moore thinks of architecture’s highest calling as facilitating the best possible quality of life in and around it, “a [flexible] instrument that enables other events and experiences to happen.” Buildings that disturb Moore are those at extremes: either trying to control and dominate experience or offering no stimulation and support for it. For Moore, overly prescriptive buildings include many of architecture’s sacred cows—including Farnsworth House and Fallingwater—works that impose the architect’s values and are too indifferent to users’ needs and comfort. Or personal fantasies that

try but inevitably fail to create some idealized life within them, such as John Soane’s house in London: Gesamtkunstwerks. For Moore, architecture is not art, responsible only to its creator.

Moore’s architectural hero is Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi because she created open, unrestrictive spaces that foster freedom, such as the São Paulo Art Museum. This position is too extreme; it demotes most of the discipline’s masterpieces, undervaluing the aesthetic and neglecting the fact that their users might embrace the kind of life these works encourage. His revered Bo Bardi art museum is, to my eyes, blank, impersonal, nondescript.

But Moore’s bugaboos include many more in this wide-ranging book. He sees the spectacular, dramatic-shaped buildings of recent decades—from the kitsch of Dubai to the shape-centered work of Frank Gehry—as capitulating to our culture’s enslavement to image. He hates architecture whose main role is marketing, branding, or creating glamour. He bemoans architects’ willingness to compromise their values to get commissions—he cites Richard Rogers’ push for the hollow-souled Millennium Dome. He sees starchitects’ ego-assertion as often inflicting financial crisis on clients and reduced functionality on users (think Zaha Hadid). He will not accept the idea that “geniuses” need not be held to standards of conventional morality.

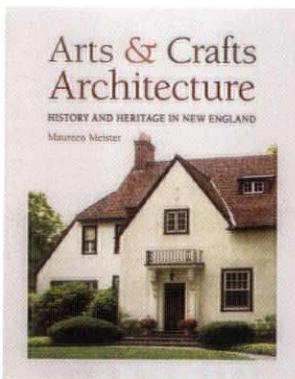
Always starting from specific instances, he bemoans the insincere, status-seeking patronage of art by the super-rich; buildings that are primarily propaganda; large housing projects that strangle residents’ individuality; and stage-set architecture pretending to be more than it is.

“Form Follows Finance,” the book’s strongest chapter, is an unblinking look at how most of what gets built is driven by developers’ greed, sanctioned by politicians’ idealization of free market forces. He sees London’s recent towers, such as Renzo Piano’s “Shard,” as paying lip service to green ideas of compact living

while really existing to increase profits. Dubai is his exemplar of the hideous contemporary rule of the super-rich, indifferent to the suffering of the have-nots, including the immigrant workers banished to Dubai’s fringe slums.

Like Mike Davis in his book *City of Quartz*, Moore is profoundly disturbed by the pervasive evils of the contemporary world. Unlike Davis, he is not completely cynical and tries to offer balanced judgments. He will not, for instance, rank manly Albertian classicism higher than an atmospheric architecture of “illusion, shadow, [and] transience.” Overall, he wants readers to be unflinchingly realistic, particularly by deflating any overestimations of the power, virtue, and importance of architecture conceived apart from living. He is lucky that he has Lina Bo Bardi’s work to admire.

**WILLIAM S. SAUNDERS** is the retired founding editor of *Harvard Design Magazine* and book review editor of *Landscape Architecture* magazine. He has authored or edited 16 books.



## Arts & Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England

Maureen Meister  
University Press of New England, 2014  
Reviewed by Beverly K. Brandt

In her portrait of a group of architects who practiced in Boston while promoting the English Arts and Crafts movement a century ago, Maureen Meister weaves sensitive descriptions of construction details and materials that convey her intimate familiarity with the subject.

In part an architectural history, this book is more a story of ideas: Meister demonstrates that the movement's ideals and turn-of-the-century Boston's intellectual climate—more so than a specific style—shaped the architecture produced by this group.

She explains how and why a majority of building types—town halls, libraries, churches, houses, schools—reflect the influence of the Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, or Old English styles, in contrast to a more progressive approach. It must have been an organizational challenge to cover the architects' varied backgrounds and their preservation of existing monuments, development of new building typologies, predilection for historicism, and fascination with new materials.

Meister has met it with clarity and logic.

The book is surprisingly comprehensive for its length. Meister begins with biographical sketches of 12 individuals who are her focus: Robert Day Andrew; George Edward Barton; Ralph Adams Cram; Lois Lilley Howe; Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr.; Charles Donagh Maginnis; Louis Chapell Newhall; William Edward Putnam, Jr.; George Russell Shaw; Richard Clipston Sturgis; Charles Howard Walker; and Herbert Langford Warren (subject of Meister's excellent 2003 monograph). They constituted, she argues, the "architect-leaders" of Boston's Society of Arts and Crafts between 1897 and 1917. Only these 12 (out of 40 architect members) achieved "Master" status in the organization.

Arts and Crafts architecture in Boston, Meister asserts, was the product of practitioners who promoted the movement's ideals. The resultant work may look historicist in comparison to the proto-Modernist work of Gustav Stickley, Frank Lloyd Wright, or Greene and Greene. But it epitomizes such "salient concepts and concerns" as fitness, beauty, joyful labor, the vernacular, simplicity, sincerity, proportion, and harmony, even as it struggles to balance historicism with originality. These ideas, she points out, reflected the influence of English thought leaders as well as that of Boston's

intelligentsia: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Eliot Norton, and Louis Brandeis. A shared ideal links the work of these 12—not a homogeneous appearance.

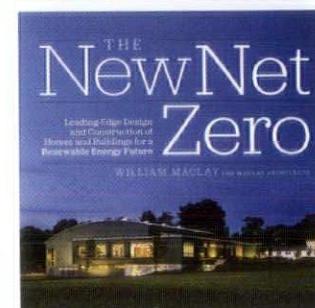
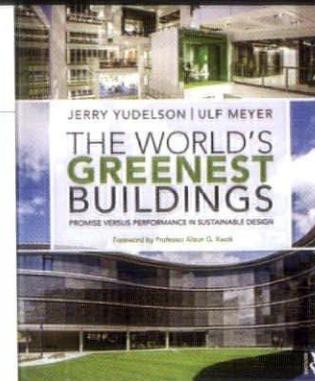
Meister competently summarizes the English Arts and Crafts movement's origins and its representative architecture, and how both influenced New England. She discusses Boston architects who predated the founding of the Society—H.H. Richardson, Robert Swain Peabody, and Charles Follen McKim—yet laid groundwork for the emerging movement. She touches on the founding of architecture schools and professional organizations, the architectural press, and the preservation movement, all of which provided context for the Society's founding and subsequent blossoming of reformist architecture in New England.

The last three chapters examine structures that reflect an Anglophilic influence, the Colonial Revival and Shingle styles, as well as the use of stucco, reinforced concrete, and steel. The chapters demonstrate that these "architect-leaders" incorporated innovative ideas regarding kitchen design and tackled new typologies: apartment buildings, gymnasiums, auto salesrooms, subway stations, and hospitals.

Meister's epilogue questions the long-term impact of this group locally and nationally. This minority of architects controlled the Society, which attracted nearly a thousand craft workers. Although their words and deeds resonated across the United States, their reticence at embracing Modernism ensured that their influence declined after the Art Deco era.

They did leave a lasting legacy of built architecture, with many structures being preserved or repurposed. But because many were educators, theorists, and critics who left behind a cache of articles, books, lectures, and correspondence, their words may have a greater impact than their works.

**BEVERLY K. BRANDT** is professor emerita of The Design School at Arizona State University.



**The World's Greenest Buildings: Promise Versus Performance in Sustainable Design**  
Jerry Yudelson and Ulf Meyer  
Routledge, 2013

**The New Net Zero: Leading-Edge Design and Construction of Homes and Buildings for a Renewable Energy Future**  
William Maclay  
Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014  
Reviewed by Charlotte Kahn

**Buildings account** for more than 40 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions annually, so the idea that a building could be responsible for no emissions at all or generate more energy than it consumes may seem fanciful. Yet that is precisely the direction in which architecture is headed. The Architecture 2030 Challenge, adopted by the AIA in 2005, commits the field to net-zero fossil-fuel emissions in all new buildings by 2030. Two new books show the way.

In *The World's Greenest Buildings*, architects Jerry Yudelson and Ulf Meyer set out to demonstrate that "uber-green building, low energy use, and great architecture are not incompatible." Their intercontinental tour of the highest-rated commercial and institutional buildings across green rating systems offers an inspirational but finally cautionary tale.

In detailed case studies, the authors discover, to their surprise, a dearth of independently verified postoccupancy

data. While some buildings transparently live up to their green billing, many owners are unwilling to share performance data once a Platinum plaque or Green Star is affixed to the entrance. And no wonder. When data are available, many buildings come up short.

Through interviews with architects and engineers, we learn that managers and occupants need help to become competent stakeholders of ultra-green buildings lest they undermine innovative, complex systems. But few post-occupancy plans include the necessary training, feedback, and monitoring.

That insight underscores the authors' conviction that truly successful green buildings reflect a tightly integrated design process engaging architects, landscape architects, systems engineers, owners, occupants, and contractors from initial goal setting through post-occupancy fine-tuning.

Finally, they find the world's green

rating systems to be "neither consistent nor comparable." For example, they note, a building achieving all the energy-efficiency points under the US Green Building Council's 2009 LEED standard uses far more energy than a state-of-the-art European building.

With the world's population slated to rise from seven to 10 billion this century and climate change upon us, the authors have little patience for lax measures and wishful thinking: "Mother Nature doesn't care about relative improvements; she only cares about absolute CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere." Without integrated design teams, data transparency and irreducible measures such as per-square-foot energy and water usage, green building performance cannot be achieved, rating systems harmonized, or valuable lessons learned and shared.

Their conclusions are mirrored in Vermont architect William Maclay's almost encyclopedic *The New Net Zero*,

which grounds the field's ambitious goal for 2030 in current practice.

Equal parts philosopher, designer, and shop teacher, Maclay culls 40 years of experience to lay out detailed and well-illustrated options for setting and achieving net-zero goals in energy and water usage, heating and cooling, lighting, and air circulation in US climate zones 4 to 7.

In case studies, many from New England and including a number of Living Buildings, he shows how long-proven technologies and intriguing new techniques such as biomimicry and interior and exterior bio-filters are creating buildings and communities in which "all flows and cycles are in balance . . . a new way of thinking about our trade." This book belongs on every "green" designer's shelf.

**CHARLOTTE KAHN**, retired director of the Boston Indicators Project at the Boston Foundation, now works on responses to climate change.



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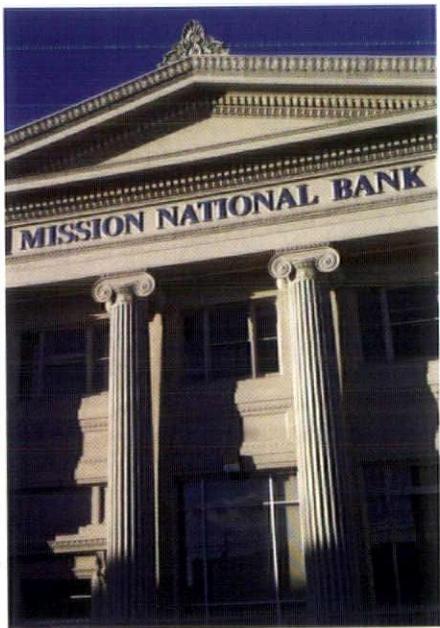
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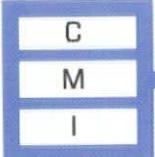


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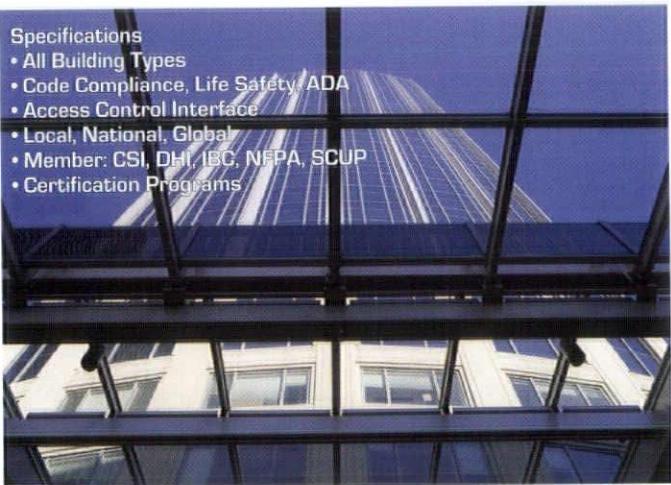
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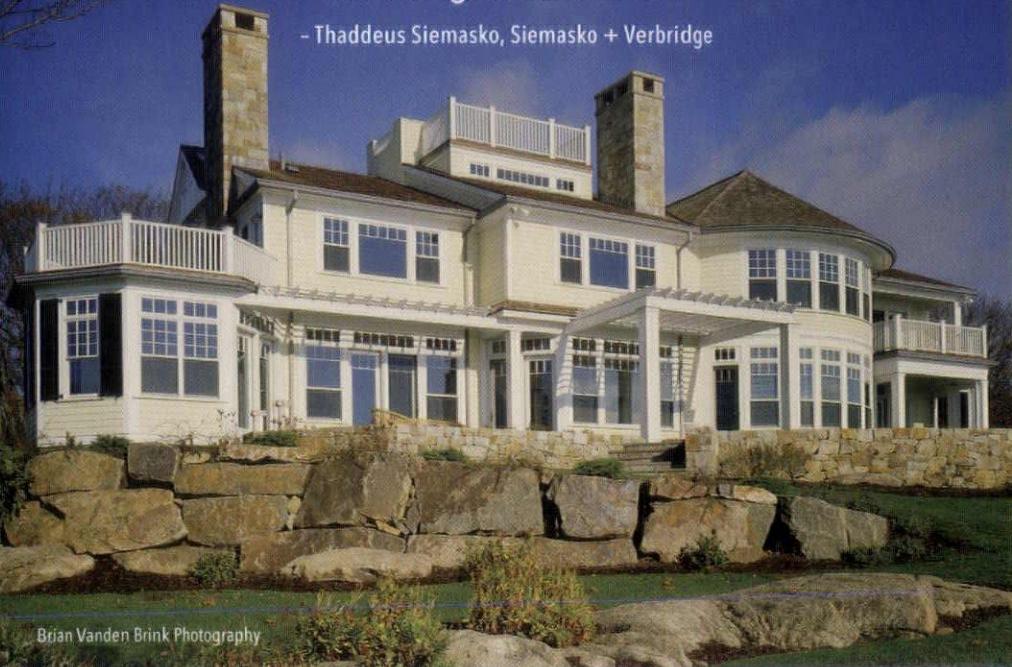
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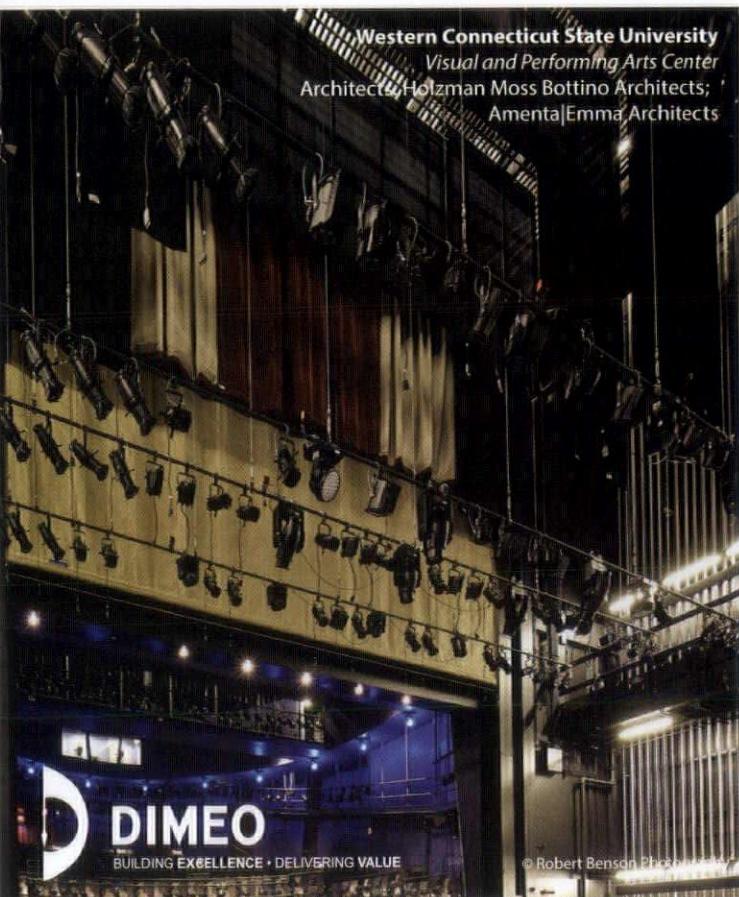
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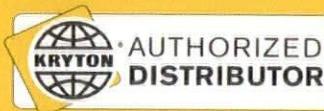
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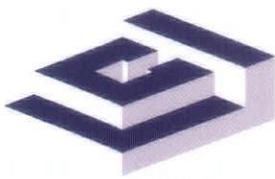
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## DARKNESS VISIBLE

**Shadows cast by tall buildings** aren't physical; sometimes they aren't even visible. But they can still constitute a private intrusion onto public space. This idea animated more than 800 protesters in New York City on a brilliant October day in 1987. Brandishing black umbrellas, they opposed the redevelopment plan for what was then the New York Coliseum, claiming the proposed towers would cast shadows across Central Park. On cue, the protesters opened their black umbrellas, mimicking the towers' encroachment.

The demonstration, organized by New York's Municipal Arts Society, was peppered with bold-faced names, including Paul Newman, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Henry Kissinger, and journalist

Bill Moyers. Central Park, said Moyers, "is the people's park, the last great preserve of democracy in the city. It does not belong to the highest bidder."

Developer Mort Zuckerman tried to renegotiate. But the Municipal Arts Society sued, and won, over improperly granted zoning rights, and the project stalled until 2000. Today it is the substantially redesigned Time Warner Center.

Advocates in the umbrella brigade had won a reprieve, but there is a sad coda to the tale. Today at least seven glitzy new towers are planned for the edge of Central Park, some of them predicted to rise 1,400 feet. Tall and thin, they will cast a series of long, straight shadows, rather like prison bars, across the people's park. ■

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**ABOVE**

Photo: Vic DeLucia/  
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